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CHRISTIAN HISTORY

IN ITS

THREE GREAT PERIODS

Third Period

MODERN PHASES

BY

JOSEPH HENRY ALLEN

Late Lecturer on Ecclesiastical History in Harvard University

Though all the windes of doctrin were let loose to play upon the earth, so Truth be in the field, we do injuriously by licencing and prohibiting to misdoubt her strength. Let her and Falshood grapple: who ever knew Truth put to the wors, in a free and open encounter?

MILTON, *Areopagitica*

BOSTON

ROBERTS BROTHERS

1891

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PREFACE.

MODERN CHRISTIANITY offers to the historical student this unique phenomenon: that it is found equally alive and vigorous at both poles (so to speak) of the intellectual sphere in which our religious life is cast. At one end of the scale it shows the most rigid adhesion to authority and dogma; at the other end it expands in the widest mental liberty. No subjection of the intellect is more complete than that with which Leo the Thirteenth enjoins upon his subjects to abide by the Mediæval system of Aquinas; no philosophic speculation is more unrestrained than that associated with the Christianity of a Schleiermacher, a Martineau, or a Colenso. Nay, while it is the nature of Science to disown any theological designation, the last results of Science and its boldest theories are eagerly embraced by many who assert their birthright and their choice in whatever may be implied by the Christian name.

I am not aware that any attempt has yet been made, for the religious student, to reconcile these opposing aspects in a single view. At all events, this — which might well appear the most important field in Christian history — has not ordinarily been even surveyed in our courses of theological instruction. It would be too much to claim for the following chapters that they aim to supply the want thus indicated. They are, however, an essay designed to show, in some detail, how that want should be met. Of the topics presented, five include the purely ecclesiastical or dogmatic phases of the Reformation Period, — that is, from 1500 to 1650; five trace the several lines followed since, in the direction of free thought and modern scholarship; while an intermediate chapter describes the bridge connecting the earlier and later, across a gulf that might seem impassable, — the passage from dogma to pure reason. This mode of treatment may serve at least to hint what should (in my view) be the method pursued, to bring the more valuable lessons of our history within hail of contemporary thought.

It would be idle to affect an *unaided* first-hand knowledge of the many names with which I have had to deal, such as to justify the tone of confidence in which I have been obliged to speak of them. As to this, I wish to say two things: that I should be

sorry to belie, by the necessary brevity and freedom of the criticisms expressed, the real veneration and homage I feel towards these great names in theology, philosophy, and science; and that — excepting some details of the physical sciences — whatever judgments are spoken or hinted rest upon a degree of direct study or acquaintance sufficient to make the judgment in all cases my own, and not the echo of another mind. I have (in other words), while following the best guides within my reach, sought to know these masters of thought from their own witness of themselves, and not from hearsay of other men. So much, I conceive, is due in common respect to the great and illuminated minds that have won for us, under hard conditions, the larger sphere of thought in which we live.

In general, I have interpolated few opinions of my own, except so far as these are necessarily implied in speaking of the views of others. But I should be ashamed to study such a field as this, or to offer anybody else the fruits of study in it, if the whole thing were a matter of moral indifference to me. On the contrary, I hold that the lessons of history are eminently lessons of practical conviction and duty; and, moreover, that the motive which this implies is the only deliverance of the soul from the dilettanteism, the scepticism, and

finally the pessimistic fatalism, which are the besetting peril of studies followed in a spirit merely scientific or merely critical. I have accordingly given at the end, briefly and with such emphasis as I can command, what seem to me the true lessons of our subject, most in accordance with the religious conditions and demands of the present day, — the general result, to which so many particular inferences appear to lead. With this hint I here take leave of my task.

J. H. A.

CAMBRIDGE, August 21, 1883.

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MODERN PHASES OF FAITH.

I.

THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION.

A CURSORY view of the event we call the Reformation, with the Religious Wars that followed close upon it, shows us at first sight one of the great, unaccountable, awful calamities of human history, — an era of anger and hatred, of wreck and change. It came not to bring peace, but a sword. So far from gladness and triumph, it would seem that we could think of it only with horror and lamentation.

And none the less, because it was an *unavoidable* calamity. We cannot explain to ourselves why a single incompleted step in spiritual progress must be taken at so frightful a cost of human suffering and guilt. We are apt to think of it simply as an historical event: of its incidents, as scenes in a drama; of its results, only as they have affected us, — in the main so largely for our benefit; of its principles, as we applaud or sympathize with the leading actors in it, on one side or the other. But we look at it again, or from another point of view, and it is all alive with passion and with pain. "If I had known what was

before me," said Luther, "ten horses would not have drawn me to it!"

The deepest tragedy of the thing was, that, as in all great conflicts of history, there was equal sincerity and equal passion on both sides. It was the sincere devotion of both parties that made the conflict obstinate and bitter. If we ask why it must be so, perhaps our only answer is, that it always is so, — in Puritan England, as in America twenty years ago, and in all Europe then. It is part of the universal struggle for existence, in which the fittest survive only in virtue of the courage, cunning, and strength by which they prove their fitness.

It is not easy to see at this distance why the ascetic fervor of Savonarola; the intellectual honesty of the early German scholars; the group of earnest and cultivated reformers at Oxford; the keen satire and common-sense ethics of Erasmus; the rude wit of Hutten; the humble, patient, faithful piety of at any rate a very large part of the Catholic priests and people, along with the anxious efforts of all the better class of ecclesiastics in every age, — why all these should have failed to bring about reform within the Church; why what we call "The Reformation" had to come about through a century of bloodshed and horror. The wisest men of that day did not see the need. Erasmus and Sir Thomas More (perhaps the two wisest men of their time) alike deplored the struggle as a mere calamity. Most likely we should have deplored it too. But it was as in the Apostles' time; and none were more ready than Luther to be amazed, with Paul, that "God had chosen the foolish

things of the world to confound the wise, and weak things to confound the mighty."

All the great revolutions of history seem to show that certain necessary changes which the wise and good have looked forward to longingly and helplessly, and tried ineffectually to bring about, have come at length in some flame or tornado of popular passion; have become the watchword of fanaticism; have been carried forward to victory under the banner of hosts who were very much in earnest, but mostly neither very wise nor very good. It was so with the French Revolution, and with our Civil War. And so it was with the Reformation. All that was really good in it had been longed for, demanded, attempted, a hundred times, in a hundred ways; but it had to wait for a crisis and a storm, which swept away, along with the evil that had grown intolerable, the peace, prosperity, and joy which seem in our ordinary mood the things best worth having in this human life.

Two things made that storm inevitable.

The first was the determination of the Catholic Church, at every cost, not to let go anything of its pretensions, its power, or its sources of wealth. It had come, frankly, from being a purely spiritual force, an organizer and guide of the higher civilization, to include everything that we mean under the name of secular government. Its head was Sovereign as well as Pontiff. Like Alexander Borgia, he might spend his revenues to build up the fortunes of a family infamous for the variety and atrocity of its crimes. Like Julius II., he might stake all his desires and ambitions on military conquest and the

splendors of a princely capital. Like Leo X., he might notoriously disclaim all pretensions of Christian faith, and be known at best as a patron of so-called religious art, at worst as a patron of the secret vices of a papal court.*

All this was publicly known, to the grief, scandal, and shame, we cannot doubt, of multitudes who, like Erasmus, lacked the courage, or like Savonarola the power, to stay the tide that must seem irresistible. For the Church was implicated, in a thousand ways, with the political system of Europe. The nature of its authority made every sovereign, in some sense, a retainer, an ally, or else an open enemy; and its will was as merciless as its hand was strong. In the premature war of revolt that broke out in Bohemia, after the Church had sealed its act of unity by the martyr death of Huss, forty thousand were slain in battle; and a resolute, hardy population were completely crushed. Europe might well wait a century after that, before the bloody experiment could be dared again; and — with all the trained skill of an ecclesiastical police that took in the birth-festival, the marriage-sacrament, the death-bed scene, the states-

* "An elegant heathen Pope, who carried on Tusculan disputations; Cardinals, who adorned their walls with scenes from Ovid's Metamorphoses, and devoted themselves to Ciceronian Latin; and a whole scene of luxurious intellectuality in Rome, contrasted bitterly with the palpable superstitions and abuses of the out-of-doors world; and the centre of Christendom, putting itself quietly and unconcernedly *ab extra* to a whole system for which it was responsible, while it taught men to despise that system, provoked at the same time disgust and rebellion against its own hypocrisy." — Mozley, *Essays*, etc., vol. i. p. 355.

man's cabinet, the council of war, and the daily espial of the confessional for part of its field — we may be sure that the Church would watch and guard very warily, would strike secretly, swiftly, and sharply, against any symptom of a thought more free and a conscience more bold than seemed consistent with its peace.

In the second place, that peace of the Church, as we ought not to forget, was very dear to great multitudes of its disciples and subjects. Whatever the Roman Church has lacked in its instructions, it has never lacked the piety of sentiment, the devotion, the adoration, the fanatical and abject loyalty, at need, of the vast majority of its adherents. Its iniquities and oppressions were to most men a far-away and uncertain rumor; its comforting words, its chanted prayers, its sacred processions, the magic of its solemn bells, the myriad links by which it fastened itself to everything that was holy, sweet, and dear in the daily life of millions, — all these were very near. By a thousand years of sleepless, incessant activity, it had woven a spell about the very conscience and thought of men; while in its invisible presence it haunted every step of their common walk. It had possessed their minds with its own scheme of creation and redemption, of heaven and hell.

In a community like ours, of twenty sects equal before the law, of popular science, and intellectual liberty, think how timidly, even here, a serious-minded man or a pious woman listens to a word which seems to invade the secret charm that resides in church authority, — thin ghost that it is of what was

once overshadowing and irresistible; and the wonder will then be, not that the Church bore the attack with so little loss of power, but that the attack was dared at all. The very logic, philosophy, and morals by which the attack had to be made were the creation, invention, instruction, of schools founded by the Church and consecrated to its defence. That particular spell was broken, in part, by the new Greek and Roman learning. But in the realm of religion proper the Church still held its own, almost undisputed; and, for authority, "the least papist," said Luther, "is more capable of government than ten of our court nobles."

Even the most daring of the Reformers did hardly more than to draw a doctrine slightly different from the same Scripture, and to deny the Church's claim to be its only interpreter. Their intellectual limitation shows us more clearly than almost anything else can do the degree to which that Church had prepossessed men's minds. The sort of spiritual authority they affected, which is held by their successors in Protestant countries even to this day, proves how natural such authority seemed then, and at what a disadvantage any must stand who tried to break it down where its prestige was so incomparably strong.

And if we think how helpless we should be, even at this day, against such spiritual dominion as still exists, without the help of the steadily increasing light that streams from modern science, it can be no wonder to us, the power of superstition then. For the astronomical spaces of our sky, they had the trim fields or palace-splendors of Paradise; for the geo-

logical depths of our earth, the dreadful and intensely real gulfs of hell, whose fires roared in the underground thunder and blazed in the flaming eruption of Vesuvius or Ætna. And so with everything. There is a whole chapter, for example, of ghastly terror in the sorcery and witchcraft of the Middle Age, — relics, perhaps, of old Paganism lingering among the people, which the Church had vainly put forth all her merciless power to suppress.

Nothing illustrates more vividly the great horror with which she had the skill to possess men's imagination than this. The Church had built up, about them and within them, a spiritual structure, which they clung to with passionate love and reverence, or else feared to question with a fear as passionate and intense, — where the very thought of doubt was a crime, to be burned out by the fires of the stake, or purged away by the flames of purgatory.

It is not likely that at any time in its history the Roman Church felt surer of its strength than the moment before the blow was struck. Its capital was never so splendid, its treasury never so rich, its priesthood never more numerous, well-trained, and confident. The very blunder by which it invited the most formidable attack was the blunder of absolute self-confidence, at the point where it was in closest contact with irreverent and hostile feeling, most exposed whether to bitter satire or to grave rebuke, most weak in making its appeal to the worse rather than the better side in human nature. In fact, its vulnerable point was in its absolute, stupid disbelief that there was such a better side in human

nature; its assumption that it could trade openly in vice, and sell indulgences to sin, — in short, that every man was bad enough to wish to do all the evil he could at the cheapest rate, if he could only be satisfied that the license he bought would hold good in the other world.

Of course, it is not the Catholic theory of Indulgences that men can be ransomed by money from the pains of hell: that is, no Catholic in his senses would ever admit that it is so. The real theory of Indulgences is simply the remission of ecclesiastical penalties, the counterpart and the relief of penance. Besides this, not directly, but by intercession of purchased prayers, the Church may promise relief from the pains of purgatory. But, by its own claims, it holds the keys of heaven and hell. It is not likely that the ignorant laity would draw any fine distinctions, any more than that a rude, unscrupulous monk like Tetzel would hesitate at any assurance to drive a trade. This he did "at a horrible rate," says Luther. St. Peter's Church was to be built and glorified in Rome; and at all risks gold must be had from Germany. The salesman was blatant and impudent. Commit what sin you will, said he, were it the violation of the Holy Virgin herself, "as soon as the gold chinks in the Pope's coffer, it is all wiped out." Luther, then "a young doctor, fresh from the forge, glowing and cheerful in the Holy Ghost" (as he describes himself), was amazed with horror. He demanded that Tetzel should be silenced; tried vainly to force on the ecclesiastics of the day the distinction between outward penance and inward penitence;

and then, to the confusion of the prelates, made a public debate of what they would hush up as a private scandal.

Years before, while toiling painfully, as a pilgrim, on his knees up the sacred stairway in Rome, the words had flashed upon his mind like a revelation, "The just shall live by faith." What was all this toilsome penance worth in the eye of God? "That journey to Rome," he used to say afterwards, "I would not have missed for a hundred thousand florins." It had revealed to him the depth of the mystery of Pagan iniquity in the Christian capital. He had gone there a pious enthusiast, saying in his heart, as he entered the gate, "Hail, holy Rome! holy by the memory of martyrs, and by the sacred blood here spilt!" He had left it, burdened with a weight upon his conscience, and perplexed by a problem he could not solve. If we can see that problem as he saw it, we have a key to the heart of the Reformation.

It may be put in some such way as this.* No man can satisfy divine justice, or be reconciled to God, by any merit of his own; for as his conscience grows more clear, he sees more plainly the gulf between himself and the Infinite. Theologically speaking, that gulf can be bridged only by IMPUTATION of the merits of Christ. So far, Anselm's view. But how shall he appropriate those merits? By formalities of ritual, fast, and penance? Rome has shown him, behind the veil, what that means. The Church, then, cannot solve the problem for him. He cannot solve

* This point is admirably developed in Canon Mozley's "Essays Historical and Theological," vol. i. pp. 326–339.

it for himself. He cuts it, frankly and audaciously, by an act of faith. BELIEVE that you are a child of God; and in that act you are his child.

I cannot go into the psychology of this solution, but must hasten to the result. At Wittenberg, on the 31st of October, 1517, Luther nailed up against the church door his ninety-five "theses," or queries, on the theory of Indulgences. He professed to be astonished at the noise they made. He had given no opinion of his own: he had only proposed, in the usual way, a few questions of abstract theology. What was all the ado about? So, with a crafty show of innocence and submission, he evaded and disguised the controversy for some three years: thorning the papal emissaries in debate; steadily appealing to the Pope; steadily declining to go to Rome in person, whither he was blandly invited, and where there were sure remedies for such complaints as his, — till he forced a position that made him known and powerful everywhere as spokesman of the German people. In this crisis he is two men at once: to-day, absolute deference and submission; within a week, doubting in his private letters if the Pope be not Antichrist. His doctrine is condemned by Leo X., and his books are ordered to be burned. Six months later, in December, 1520, he answers by publicly burning the papal bull, and with it the entire code of Decretalism; and the event we call the Reformation has entered upon the field of history.

At Worms next year, at the Imperial Diet (April 17 and 18, 1521), Luther gives his immortal answer to the demand that he shall retract: "Since you seek

a plain answer, I will give it without horns or teeth. Except I am convinced by holy Scripture, or other evident proof, — for I trust neither Pope nor Council: I am bound by the Scripture by me cited, — I cannot retract, and I will not, anything; for against conscience it is neither safe nor sound to act." And here he breaks from the formal Latin of his defence into his sturdy Saxon mother-tongue, intelligible and plain enough, I think, for our ears to understand: "*Hie stehe ich: Ich kan nicht anders: Gott helff mir:* AMEN!" *

It would not be possible here to trace, in the briefest outline, the story of events that followed; or even — which is much more tempting — quote the anecdotes and phrases that point out to us, with a curious vividness, the character of this great popular leader. A single thing is enough. The power, the terror, the prestige, the fascination, the grandeur and splendor of the Church, all are weighed against the solitary conviction of one man, himself a sworn servant of the Church, and penetrated to the soul by awe of her authority. In these scales that one man's conscience overweighs. In all history, I am not sure that there is another example quite so clear, that "One, with God, is a majority." Equal courage and sincerity, it may be, had been shown by Wiclif, by Huss, by Savonarola; but now the hour has come, as well as the man. Even when the little company met in the upper chamber at Jerusalem, — at any rate, there were a hundred and twenty; and they did not, by any means, stand so openly against everything august

* Works, Ed. of 1562, vol. ii. p. 165 *b*. I copy the old spelling.

and formidable in the world. They could have had no such awe of the Roman Empire as he must have had of the Roman Church, and no such conviction that they were committed to its overthrow. Luther is the one great figure which represents just that thing on the stage of history; and, in ever so slight view of the circumstances, it is impossible not to pause an instant to point out that moment, that example, of the very highest moral courage. Luther is in no sense, in our view, a great intellectual leader. The forms of thought he clung to the world is letting slip without a pang. In his career it is often doubtful whether piety or policy, whether craft or passion, whether reason or prejudice, were stronger in him. It may be doubted whether he had the pure physical courage of several other leaders of the Reformation, — Zwingli or Latimer, for example. But this great act of his life put him worthily, as Captain, at the head of the great army which just then was setting out to march under the banner of Light.

If we speak thus of the courage of the Leader, what shall we say, on the other hand, of those who were only followers — obscure, inconspicuous, unknown? For this great revolution has its humbler, tenderer side. The new faith finds its warmest disciples among the numerous population of the industrious poor, in lower Germany and along the lower Rhine. Among the heresies of the later Middle Age, none had been more dreaded than the mystic and sentimental piety — Beghard or Lollard — that was forever emancipating itself from ritual and dogma, seeking only the inward assurance of Divine love. This was

the spirit in which the Reformation found now its natural ally, — a spirit which the Church must exterminate at all cost. And so we read of mothers who were burned alive for teaching their child the Lord's Prayer in its mother-tongue; of children compelled with their own hand to light the fagot of their fathers' martyrdom; of women, who did not cease to sing their hymn of sweet and patient trust as they lay in the pit where they were just going to be buried up alive.

It is in the hymns that rise amid the hum of daily toil, that keep time to the darting of the shuttle and the pulses of the loom, that cheer the lace-weaver's busy task, that swell from the broad plain where congregations gather in the open air to their out-door Sunday worship (men, women, and children, forty thousand sometimes at once), or that float in the manly tones of the wayfaring laborer, as he goes from city to city, perhaps at hazard of his life, bearing with him those precious versions of the Psalms set to music, which the press at Geneva is scattering through all Christendom, — it is in these pious hymns and sacred melodies that the living religion of the time becomes blended with all affections and tasks of home, and sanctifies the daily life of thousands. This is the soil, often drenched with blood, in which our modern liberties have their root. Through this channel of humble toil, and pain, and tears, the forms of modern piety are taking shape, and the tone is given to the tenderest, purest, deepest faith of the modern world.

A better name could not have been taken to describe the principle on which Luther now, deliberately and consciously, staked his very salvation, than the

phrase which he borrowed from Paul, "Justification by Faith." The facts of religious history teach us very little, unless they teach us that a time of spiritual crisis has always to be met in just that way. The strong conviction of one man must be brought face to face with whatever we can understand by the phrase "powers of the world," — whether prejudice of education, government authority, temptation of indolence, sympathy, friendship, interest, personal peace and quiet, — and must be strong enough to overcome.

It must be the conviction of *one man standing alone.* A thousand more may do as he does, but each man's act must be his own. The encouragement of example, the sympathy of friends, the thousand wholesome influences that surround one, and keep his heart whole, — these are for ordinary men and ordinary times. The moment of crisis, whether in a conspicuous epoch of history, or in one man's lonely struggle in the dark, demands a faith that absolutely dispenses with them all. A ship is good to sail in; a raft, plank, or float may keep you, at need, from drowning; but you never learn to swim till the moment you trust yourself absolutely to the buoyancy of the water: then it is no matter to you how deep it is. It is only by such a faith as this that, in the true religious sense, any man living can be justified. It must be, in other words, that fact in the soul which Paul means, when he says one must have his salvation by the direct grace of God. It is his own solitary relation, and not another man's, to that ultimate spiritual or moral truth.

The phrase in which Luther stated this great fact of personal experience — faith in the Scriptures, faith in Christ — was full of meaning and power; because it took at once the place of the form, the symbol, the technicality, with which the Church had covered it, in the multiplicity of her symbols, in the tradition heaped on tradition of her interpretation, in the minute, incessant exactions of her discipline. So that the phrase "faith in the Scriptures," "faith in Christ," expressed the pure freedom of the religious life. But as soon as that phrase in turn is overlaid with form and technicality, — as soon as it prevents us from seeing, instead of helping us to see, that there is literally *nothing* between the conscience of such a man and the Infinite itself, with whatever he can conceive or know of the sense of moral obligation, — then it becomes a falsehood and not a truth. When Garrison stood out against the church-powers of his day on what to him was an absolute moral conviction, it was he, not they, that kept all which was worth keeping in the phrase "Salvation by Christ," — understanding by "Christ" the highest symbol we know of a ransomed nature. When John Stuart Mill said, "I will call no being good, who is not what I mean when I apply that epithet to my fellow-creatures; and if such a being can sentence me to hell for not so calling him, to hell I will go," — it was he that was justified by faith, not the theologians who drove him to use that phrase. In seeking to understand the great phases of human history, let us endeavor, once for all, to deal not with names but with things.

It is not, then, the symbol of theology, but the fact

of life that we try to understand in Luther's sublime doctrine of Justification by Faith. What it meant at that time we must endeavor to see not by the detail of study and interpretation so much as by the exercise of historical sympathy, — by comprehending, if we can, the feeling of fearful joy, of trembling hope, of grateful freedom, of increasing courage and strength, in the minds of those who responded to Luther's appeal, and who struck like strong swimmers, or else were borne as trusting voyagers, into that deep stream of a new mental life.

Helps to such imaginative sympathy we have in lives of the Reformers; in hymns, correspondence, and other pious writings of the time; in tender tales, half-fictitious, which show how the new influence radiated first in those quiet home-circles grouped nearest about the centre from which it issued. But my present aim is only to point out this one thing in the same line of thought that we have been following: how the declaration of Luther suddenly made men aware of a new relation in which they stood, personally, to God himself and all divine realities. That word carried them right back to the Bible itself, especially to the Psalms and Epistles, in which they found the very fountain-head of religious truth. All the enormous mass of tradition, ceremony, penance, that had intervened, was suddenly swept away, as a mist by a gust of wind; and there was open to them, very literally, a new sky and a new earth, quite hidden from them till then. They, too, were face to face with the Infinite. In the joy and strength of that thought, they were emancipated from the yoke of fear.

What astonishes me most in it all is, that these men and women, — humble, devout souls, that by nature and training must have been among the most devoted of the children of the Church, — that they, when once this liberating word has been spoken, seem never to have felt a single doubt. All their lives they had been told that to distrust the slightest word of the Church was heresy, deserving infinite wrath and torment, more heinous than any other sin. Yet at a word that great dread passes utterly away; and in the deadly warfare of a hundred years against ecclesiastical power, hedged as it was with so much of ancient reverence, and having on its side the appalling yet cowardly alternative, "If you are right, we at least are safe; but if we are right, then you are lost forever," — in all that long and bitter war, the faith of the Protestants in their own cause never once wavered. Individuals fell away, but the heart of Protestantism was never vexed by the shadow of any doubt.

This, I say, is the great fact that amazes me. And yet the creed of Protestants themselves was vacillating and inconsistent on that very point of liberty of conscience. Calvin burned Servetus, believing his heresy to be damnable. "I killed Münzer," said Luther, "and his death is a load round my neck; but I killed him because he sought to kill my Christ." Yet, with all these differences, with the numberless "variations" which Bossuet charged against them, orthodox and heterodox alike, Protestants never wavered in their faith, that the way they had found was the right and the safe way. That way certainly was

not the way of accurate opinion; it was, so far as it was a true way, the way of free conscience. And their justification, too, before the great tribunal of history, is what Luther's had been at the bar of God, — the "Justification of Faith."

The Reformation-period may be reckoned, very broadly, as covering about a hundred and fifty years, — that is, from early in the sixteenth to the middle of the seventeenth century. This term, again, may be pretty accurately divided into three periods of not very unequal length, — that of theological controversy, of religious wars, and of civil or diplomatic struggles culminating in the Thirty Years' War. The close of these periods is marked respectively by the treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis, in which France and Spain were mutually pledged to the armed extermination of heresy (1559), shortly following the religious peace of Augsburg (1555), and when the Council of Trent was just approaching its end; the Truce with Spain (1609), in which the Dutch Republic secured its virtual independence; and the Treaty of Westphalia (1648), which makes the point of departure for the diplomatic history of modern Europe. This last date also corresponds with the captivity of Charles I., and the establishment of the Puritan Commonwealth in England.

The first thing that strikes us in this rapid review is, that it is a period not of construction but of transition. The work it had in hand, it necessarily left incomplete. It launched the political and social fabric of Europe upon a course of revolution and reconstruction, of which it is far too soon, even now, to predict

the end. Its protest in the name of Free Conscience was only a far-away anticipation of our era of Free Thought. The political arrangements that resulted from it were only earlier steps in that era of revolution which is upon us now. Its chaotic struggles for better social justice were only the harbinger of that broad popular movement, which has come to one crisis already in America, and to another in France, and which is only beginning, at this late day, to find its interpretation in what we have learned to call Social Science.

Thus the event we call The Reformation is not so simple in theory as the inauguration of Protestant theology. It is the transition from the imperial-ecclesiastical system of the Middle Age to the free thought, democratic policies, and social levellings of the modern world. The ashes of its theological warfare are still hot; the fires of its revolutionary principles still burn. The last French Empire went down in 1870, in an attempt to recover something of that old dominion; and the lost cause of the temporal power of the Pope is held by some good Catholics to be no unlikely occasion of another religious war in our own day.

There is, however, a certain dramatic unity and completeness in the period just defined, which is not at all apparent since. For then there was a definite issue, clearly understood by all the contending parties, — the victory or defeat of the Mediæval system, in Church and State, which was the real object of attack. So that, during this period, we may say that not only all thinking men, but all governments,

states, and towns, all bodies of armed men, almost we might add all trades, all professions, and every man, were forced to take sides for or against the Pope. Such tides of revolutionary thought and passion work out very widely on institutions and events; and we may compare the track they cleave in the field of history to a glacier's path through the valley, which we trace by the boulders and drift it piles along its edge. Its present action is purely destructive. Only its later effect is seen in the deeper soil and the increased fertility.

The events of the Reformation-period belong to the field of general history, and it would be impossible to give ever so brief an outline of them here. Some of them will meet us from time to time, in the view we shall have to take of a few conspicuous objects in that wide field. For the present, we have only to look at a few consequences of the working out of the Protestant idea.

And here we are struck, first of all, by seeing how quickly Protest runs out to Individualism. The wide flood beats, we say, like waves upon a sea-wall, until it is ruined and undermined. But each wave beats at its particular stone. There are as many protests as there are types of mind and conscience. Each has its own point to carry; each is independent of all the rest. At first Luther stands alone. When he is no longer alone, but head of a great host, he finds the errors of his fellows as dangerous as those of the common enemy. At Marburg he turns his back when Zwingli, a bolder and a clearer-headed man than he, offers his right hand in token of fraternity. Carlstadt

and Calvin have a will as well as he, and respect his decision no more than he the Pope's. The logic of all this is soon seen. As the first Reformer stood alone, confronting the world of Catholic Christendom, and meeting the Pope's excommunication by an excommunication of his own, so Protestantism itself comes down fast to the condition of strife among numberless jealous individualisms, with as many sects as there are men to make them or names to call them by, till many a church is literally cut down to the gospel minimum of two or three.

But, again, if it were only to make its own existence possible, Protestantism must find some check to this dispersion. There must be some common ground of attack and defence. The interior history of Protestantism is by no means so simple a thing as a history of opinions branching out more and more widely asunder, tapering from dogmatism towards scepticism at one pole and sentimental mysticism at the other. On the contrary, it is the history of a conflict between two opposing tendencies. Over against the demand of liberty is set the need of union. The process is not random and chaotic, as it looks at first, but is eminently dramatic. The fatal division of Lutheran and Reformed in Germany is quelled in the terror of the Thirty Years' War. The quarrelsome sectaries in Puritan England are sharply disciplined under the military rule of Cromwell. But without such outside pressure, the dispersion is as sure as that of steam in the open air. The weakness of Protestantism is from the same source as its strength, — that elasticity, which means the mutual repulsion of its particles.

Naturally, the Protestant forces attempt in self-defence to rally under some one standard of authority. And at first the problem seems an easy one. From the Church in its corruption fall back upon the Church in its simplicity. From Councils and Priests appeal to inspired Prophets and Apostles. For the false Vicar of God take the infallible Word of God. "The Bible, the Bible only, is the religion of Protestants!" But quickly it appears that the Bible may be read in almost as many ways as there are minds to read it. If Luther and Calvin differ as to some of its plainest words, what must be the effect of offering to millions the whole array of history, prophecy, proverb, appeal, and fervid inward experience, that go to make up that book? Some formula of belief — something more than the simple watch-word Justification by Faith — might seem a clear necessity of the position. At first a Confession, then a Creed. And, the Creed once defined and taken for authority, soon follows the whole long story of bigotry, exclusion, religious hate, sectarian jealousy and feud; till many frankly choose the yoke of Rome again before this mockery of freedom, and many more abandon all hope of fellowship or strength or meaning in religion itself. To such melancholy straits the human mind must pass in the evolution of a great idea!

Again, the weakness of Protestantism is seen in its narrowing of the field and meaning of Religion as a power in the world. It was the glory of the great Catholic structure of the Middle Age, that — with all its evil ambition and its crimes against humanity — it did meet the problem of political and social life in

a broad way, so far as it could be comprehended at that day, and with inflexible courage tried to solve it. It did this in a Name before which all differences of social level absolutely disappeared. Emperor or king, peasant or serf, priest or noble, it knew men only as equal subjects of its spiritual empire. It declared the state of slavery impossible for a Christian, and did in fact practically abolish slavery in Europe by embracing all ranks and conditions within its fold. It established the Truce of God, setting a bound to the rage of private wars, and winning society slowly towards a reign of peace. It created charities on a scale with which the world had till then known nothing to compare. In an age of strife, ravage, destitution, and disease, far worse than what we suffer now, it grappled as it could with that hopeless question of Pauperism : on false principles, indeed — by adopting and consecrating Mendicancy ; but perhaps no other way was possible then. At least, it was better than brutal and pitiless neglect, — the old Pagan way. It assumed the charge of educating every child, — not in the way we think right, but at least so far as was needful to make him a subject of its empire and an heir of its hope ; and so, of meeting hand-to-hand the vice, ignorance, and savagery of the lowest order in the State. In the Catholic system once, as in Papal countries still, every man, however guilty or wretched, is in theory at least to be met by the formal offices of the Church for instruction, for comfort, for rescue from sin, at least for absolution at his death-hour. This splendid ideal it has always professed, of what Religion has to do for society as well as for every man.

As against this, not only we have to be reminded that in all Protestant countries more than half the population, numerically, stand in no acknowledged religious connection at all with their fellow-men, and are only approached, at hazard as it were and uncertainly, by the voluntary efforts of a few, moved individually by the power of the gospel and by love for souls. That, perhaps, is the inevitable consequence of respecting as we do the private conscience. But we see, too, that Protestantism does not understand the energies it has evoked. It fears them, shrinks from them, makes terms with them, does not so much as attempt to educate and control them. Liberty of opinion it has sought vainly, by every expedient, to pacify, overawe, and hush. The portentous birth of Democracy, which sprang up at its side, it began to fear and hate, as soon as that outran the cautious limits the Reformers had proposed. When the Nobles scorned Luther's counsels of mercy, and the Peasants rejected his words of peace, he — a man of the people if any man ever was — was sharp and implacable to side with authority against rebellion. "A pious Christian," he said, "should die a hundred deaths, rather than give way a hair's-breadth to the Peasants' demands!" In America we have seen in our own day the encroachments of a despotism as sordid and merciless as any in Naples or Vienna, erected on the basest of all possible foundations, property in man, — a despotism which under forms of popular government insulted every instinct of liberty, and under forms of law violated every principle of justice, — yet how slightly held in check by the Protestant

Church, spite of its birth-right of freedom! how largely helped by the alliance of a degenerate Roman Church, with its instinct of servility!

The ecclesiastical life of Protestantism is thus weak and narrow. Its strength and its glory have been in another field. The history of Protestant nations is the history, with scarce any exception, of the enterprise, discovery, arts, science, invention, learning, and philanthropy most characteristic of modern times. Set aside the one great enterprise of the Jesuit missions, — whose best strength was spent two hundred years ago, — it would be hard to show one great movement of the last three centuries, of permanent and marked success, affecting deeply the welfare of mankind at large, dating from the Roman Church or from any people within its communion, to set off against the great political reforms of England, the colonizing of free States in America and Australia, the thought and skill given to popular education, the revolution in commerce wrought by steam, the conquest of nature inaugurated by modern science.

All these are not, of course, to be credited to Protestantism consciously working out as such. They are not its product as an organized spiritual force. Far from it. But they are trophies of the emancipated energy, the wider intelligence, the individual force of conviction, the moral courage, which it was the mission of Protestantism to set free as an agency in the world's affairs. And widely as the spell of Rome has remained unbroken, so widely this energy has continued latent, inert, impossible.

II.

THE CATHOLIC REACTION.

THERE is some truth, no doubt, in the saying that what Rome has lost of temporal dominion, in consequence of the great Protestant schism, she has gained, or widened, as a purely spiritual power, in the region of conscience, emotion, and doctrinal belief. The two dogmas added to the Catholic creed in these last few years — the Immaculate Conception (1854) and Papal Infallibility (1870) — are cited by fervent Romanists as a proof of this. And it is very likely true that Rome never had a more absolute hold upon the devotion of a larger multitude of subjects than to-day, or anything like so large. If it is so, it is one result of the remarkable reaction in the sixteenth century, which we have now to consider.

For the era of the Reformation was in one sense a new birth for Rome, as well as for the forces on the other side. It is not merely a Protestant charge, that the Church of Rome at this period was flagrantly, perhaps fatally, corrupt. Catholic authorities, also, declare that its degradation was very deep, and that to all appearance its very existence was staked on a radical reformation. Both parties are agreed that the reform was needed. Each asserts that it was genuine and wholesome on its own side. Each charges that it was deceptive and unreal on the other.

But, in fact, two very genuine reformations were going on together, impelled by the same general motive, though radically different in their method. We have seen how that which we call Protestant was staked on individual conviction and justification by faith. Even the reactionary moods in Luther's own life, even the surprising compromises accepted by Melanchthon, do not alter the main fact. Reform within the Church, on the contrary, — as demanded by Erasmus and Sir Thomas More, — was staked on the reinforcing of discipline, the expanding and fixing of dogma, and the perfecting of the ecclesiastical system considered as a piece of religious machinery.

Looking at the tremendous passions and obstinate convictions arrayed upon the field, and the life-and-death struggle in which they felt themselves engaged, nothing seems at first sight more pitiably irrelevant and weak than the plan of campaign laid down by the Catholic authorities, and developed into the weary technicalities of the Acts and Canons of the Council of Trent.

But to judge the situation so would be a hasty judgment. We must still keep in view that image of the forces of the Church as of an Army trained in fixed rules of discipline, and acting under a single recognized command. Whatever makes that discipline more perfect, adds so much to the power of attack and defence. Whatever makes more clear the plan of the campaign which is to be fought, does so much to make the officers intelligent, resolute, and united. Whatever exalts the authority of the supreme command, goes so far to make the force a

unit, and irresistible. Only — and here will be the real criticism from the modern point of view — the best disciplined army may be sent out into the wilderness, or in the wrong direction; and so may be doing only mischief, or may waste its strength in "fighting so as one beateth the air."

This, perhaps, is only to say that the modern mind is likely to fail in recognizing the *objective point* which the Catholic strategy aims at, moving as it does on a different level, and towards other things. But at least the modern mind cannot fail to see the splendid perfection of that equipment, or to admire the complete discipline and devotion of that army. It may also grant — if it is wise as well as logical — that, whatever the atrocities of the method, the modern world could not spare this great factor in its life; that society, in its common moralities and in its political order, owes a vast debt to the modern Church of Rome. The new world of thought is not the only thing. Institutions and moralities, which are the slow work of civilization, float, after all, at the mercy of the great sea they are embarked on, which is human nature itself; and this is but a chaos of passions and desires, when not under check of one form or another of spiritual force. Just now, the Roman Church has still in reserve the greatest supply of that force, available for very large spaces and populations. Among the two hundred millions of its nominal subjects, it is likely that her discipline is none too strong, and none too skilfully organized and handled, for the security of modern life from still worse catastrophes than have already overtaken it.

At any rate, that motive was urgent enough in the moral disorders of the sixteenth century. Whatever else the Reformation had done, it had found no remedy for those disorders. In some directions, it had definitely added to them — as, with a sort of dismay, Luther often declared. To say nothing of Antinomian extravagances, or the fury of the Peasants' War, there was an unsettlement of morals as well as beliefs, for which the Reformation was clearly responsible. It could not fail to shock men's sense of the sanctity of oaths, that Luther's own marriage was the violation of his monastic vow. He could peril the whole cause of the Reformation by his break with Zwingli and the Swiss reformers on a question of ritual; but did not see his way clear — setting Scripture as he did above the Church — to forbid the bigamy of so important a partisan as Philip of Hesse. As a remedy for some of the worst evils of society, whatever it may have been for the cheer and strength of single lives, Protestantism had completely failed; or if not completely, at any rate so far that Italy or France could not well be challenged to adopt the course of Germany, or the Church bidden to relax her rules of discipline as guide of the common conscience. Add to all this, that men's piety and reverence, which touch them nearer than their moral sense, were appalled by the free handling of sacred things, or things deemed sacred, in the incredible coarseness — beastliness is not too strong a term to use now and then — of the Lutheran polemics.

So much for the negative side. And for the positive, the Catholic reaction had in it the genuine ele-

ments of a religious and moral revival. As is the way with every vital religious movement, it began with personal conviction of a definite moral evil and of its remedy; with a power of personal piety and devotion, also, that kindled to the flame of a genuine passion, and so created the force that presently brought into play a new, complete, and very powerful system of machinery.

We must call to mind here what we have seen so often in the life of the Mediæval Church, — its immense advantage in having close at hand, ready at every crisis, an organized type or ideal of the religious life, according to its own conception of it, in the Religious Orders. The forces of any new awakening of conscience, or reform of morals, play easily in channels whose shape and direction were constructed for them, with infinite pains and skill, while the Church still had the vigor of its growth. The old form is taken possession of by the new spirit, and is embarked on a new career under another name. Thus is saved the expenditure of force needed to frame itself a new body, when spirit takes on flesh. An institutional religion always has the advantage over free religion in this prodigious economy of its strength.

We do not often reckon the enormous drain on vital force needed to create a new organization, even of the simplest. Two thirds of the food we eat, say the physiologists, go merely to keep the vital machinery in order. Consider what it costs a growing child to put forth a single tooth, for example; or a grown man to repair a broken bone. It is not hard,

perhaps, to fabricate the shape; but to get the life into it is very hard. And it can be done only by vital connection, at some point, with an organization which is already alive.

But the spirit must still go before the form. And nothing is more interesting, at the period we are considering, than to see how the personality of a few remarkable men comes in just here to bridge over the space, and to make the revolution possible. What was wanted was, that religion should be *as real a thing* within the lines of the corrupt and decrepit Church of Rome, as in the lives of those who had caught the new inspiration of Reform, and were brought close to the very Source of all life by their doctrine of a personal and immediate salvation.

The story of the organizing of a new religious Order is always essentially the same: intensity of feeling on the part of its leader or founder; the contagion of that feeling among kindred minds; a special practical aim that makes a little divergence — not too great — from the beaten track of existing institutions; a shaping out of rule after the familiar model, but with provision for the new object in view; some fresh device of austerer discipline, answering to the fervor of the motive freshly felt. All these we find in the case of the two new Orders which were the most characteristic growth of this period, the Theatines and the Jesuits. The date of the former (1524) shows it as emerging from the very heat and dust of the first conflict with the Lutheran protest. The date of the latter (1540) is a little after the armed league of Protestant nobles and the counter-league

of Catholic, a little before the outbreak of those armed forces in the Smalcaldic war.

In fact, a doctrine very much like Luther's had spread widely, and was zealously professed in Italy. A style of enlightened religious thought, — best known to us through the name of Vittoria Colonna, the friend of Michael Angelo, and through his own religious sonnets, — devout, intelligent, refined, and somewhat austere, was in superior minds fast taking the place of the set forms of churchly piety; so perilously fast, indeed, that the very phrase "faith in Christ," or any special fervor or originality of spiritual exercises, became matter of suspicion and alarm. Partly to enlist this force, partly to check its escape into forbidden channels, there emerges a sudden energy of ecclesiastical reform.

The leader in this direction was a man of the most austere and rigorous type of Catholic piety, — Caraffa, afterwards Cardinal and (1555–1559) Pope Paul IV. As priest and as bishop he had labored with great zeal to reform the morals and remove the abuses of his charge; and he gained leave to lay down his rank and office, and give himself to the one work of founding and directing a new religious Order, — the Theatines, so called from the name of the diocese which he had left.

Besides the customary vow of poverty, like that of other Mendicant orders, it was enjoined that these new brethren might not even beg. Besides the set office of preaching, like the Dominicans, they became street-missionaries, — from bench, platform, or wayside stone, or in the market-place, arresting the ear of the

populace of Italian cities. Besides the office of consolation of the sick and dying, there was the special duty laid on them of attending on condemned criminals, and carrying into the dungeon the warning or comforting message of the Church. The new Order was never large in numbers. It is almost unknown now, except in a few localities. Its recruits were mostly from men of education and rank. It was never, like the Franciscan, broadly popular; or, like the Jesuit, the agent of vast enterprises for the Church. It interests us rather as the first strong effort in that direction, and as bringing into the field one or two marked men, who did much to shape the policy and guide the action of the new Romanism.

With the story of Loyola's early life, and his amazing self-inflictions, we have nothing here to do. One incident in his career, that which shows him as the link between the two religious orders already named, is thus told by Macaulay: * —

"In the convent of the Theatines at Venice, under the eye of Caraffa, a Spanish gentleman took up his abode, tended the poor in hospitals, went about in rags, starved himself almost to death, and often sallied into the streets, mounted on stones, and, waving his hat to invite the passers-by, began to preach in a strange jargon of mingled Castilian and Tuscan. The Theatines were among the most zealous and rigid of men; but to this enthusiastic neophyte their discipline seemed lax, and their movements sluggish; for his own mind, naturally passionate and imaginative, had passed through a training which had given to all its peculiarities a morbid intensity and energy. . . .

* Miscellanies: "Ranke's History of the Popes."

"Dissatisfied with the system of the Theatines, the enthusiastic Spaniard turned his face towards Rome. Poor, obscure, without a patron, without recommendations, he entered the city where now two princely temples, rich with painting and many-colored marble, commemorate his great services to the Church; where his form stands sculptured in massive silver; where his bones, enshrined amidst jewels, are placed beneath the altar of God. His activity and zeal bore down all opposition; and under his rule the Order of Jesuits began to exist, and grew rapidly to the full measure of his gigantic powers. With what vehemence, with what policy, with what exact discipline, with what dauntless courage, with what self-denial, with what forgetfulness of the dearest private ties, with what intense and stubborn devotion to a single end, with what unscrupulous laxity and versatility in the choice of means, the Jesuits fought the battle of their Church, is written in every page of the annals of Europe during several generations. In the Order of Jesus was concentrated the quintessence of the Catholic spirit; and the history of the Order of Jesus is the history of the great Catholic reaction."

Ignatius Loyola, a young and brilliant Spanish cavalier, had been grievously wounded by a cannon-ball in the siege of Pampeluna, early in the year 1521. Of all the pious or romantic legends by which he fed his fancy during the year of extreme suffering while in the agony of the crude and cruel surgery he endured,* none can be more extraordinary or more romantic than the story of his own life. Its incidents are familiar, and need not be retold. Its results are all that concern us now.

* In the course of which his shattered leg had to be rebroken and reset more than once, in the vain hope to straighten it.

Modern Romanism is something in many points quite different from the Mediæval institution which has occupied us before. It is commonly said to have in the Jesuit Order not its Champion only, but its Master. If this is true, at least that master appeared first in the guise of the humblest of servants. Besides the ordinary vow of obedience common to all monastic bodies, this Order must always be at the immediate service of the Papacy, in any direction, or for any mission, to which its members might be sent. Besides the ordinary offices of piety, a most elaborate system of education was developed, — on Catholic principles, as opposed to the free intellectual training of the modern world; so that the Jesuits have become perhaps the most accomplished guild of Teachers ever known. The two vast missionary enterprises to the East and West — in India, China, and Japan on the one hand; from Canada to Paraguay on the other — which are the wonder and the boast of Modern Romanism, are the exclusive glory of the Jesuits. And there is nothing in the old stories of Pagan persecution, or in the martyrdoms and torments inflicted by religious bigotry ever since, which has not been voluntarily encountered — or would not be, to-day — by the extraordinary body of men trained and disciplined under the rule, and fortified by the "spiritual exercises," of St. Ignatius.*

It is the more remarkable that a foundation so fervent and so loyal should have barely escaped in

* Of the illustrations of this which might be given, none are more interesting or more heroic than those in Parkman's "Jesuits in North America."

the beginning that sleepless and intolerant persecution, of which it has been the most active agent ever since. The unwonted fervor, and doubtless some novelty of phrase, in Loyola's manual of devotion, caused him to be arrested and incarcerated at Salamanca. The merciless Inquisition of Spain was in full vigor there, and its all-suspecting vigilance detected signs of heresy in the book. His orthodoxy was hardly established, and he had but just escaped from those menacing fangs, when he found himself again under surveillance in Paris, and was three months in making good his claim to be a true Catholic, or tolerated as a defender of the faith.

It is very characteristic of the age, the cause, and the man, that once arrived in Rome, a little later, he urged upon the Pope the need of a "Supreme and Universal Tribunal of Inquisition," subject to no less authority than the Head of the Church himself, to have in its charge the suppression of heresy throughout the world. Such a tribunal was founded in Rome, in the year 1542, by Pius III., a few weeks after his summons of the great Reform Council which met three years later in Trent. Only the Spanish Inquisition, which for something more than sixty years had proved itself too faithful and efficient to be distrusted, was exempt by special privilege from its jurisdiction.

And so we meet face to face, at this moment of crisis, the most startling phenomenon of the Catholic reaction. Reformation, in its view, means a revival of Mediæval piety, nourished and organized under monastic discipline, used to strengthen the ecclesiastical power, and having for its method the well-understood

processes of the Inquisition. We must keep this latter fact in sight. An illustration or two will enable us to do this more distinctly.

The series of popes for sixty years, down to the massacre of St. Bartholomew in 1572, from the "reforming" Paul III. to the "savage" Pius V., were all known for some special zeal or service in the cause of religious persecution, — not in the mild way we sometimes understand that phrase, but by the horrible and sometimes literally unspeakable methods of misery invented by the Inquisition.

Cardinal Caraffa, the great leader of "reform within the Church," was equally great as an inquisitor: at his death a Roman mob, with ferocious joy, rushed to tear down the prisons of the Holy Office, with loud curses on his name.

Another great and famous inquisitor, Bartholomew Carranza, Archbishop of Toledo and Primate of Spain, high in honor in the Council of Trent, — the same who undertook the reforming of the English Church under Philip and Mary, and with his own lips condemned the English Primate Archbishop Cranmer to the flames, — himself a few years later fell under the sleepless and remorseless jealousy of that terrible Office; was treacherously arrested; suffered the horrors of imprisonment for eighteen years; and died at his release, having with difficulty established his soundness in the faith.

We hear, in 1547, of a "terrific episode" in Naples, where the populace rose to resist the introduction of the hated tribunal there, and fought so furiously, that before night the last man of a body of three thousand

soldiers sent in to quell the riot lay slaughtered in the street.

To understand the fury of the English at the very name of Spaniard, in this time of terror, we may read the story of one Burton, an English shipmaster at Cadiz, — for the Inquisition respects no foreign flag, but treats heresy as a local crime, — who was seized on some pretence of heretical expressions, thrown into a dungeon, submitted to torments and threats, and finally burned alive at Seville (December 22, 1560). The story was told at length by one Frampton, sent out to be his advocate, who was seized in the same way, was put to the rack after witnessing his client's martyrdom, and was hardly released under condition of living in Spain under that eye of tyranny, but afterwards escaped. The real crime was the ship-master's rich cargo: the Inquisition profited by its seizure to the amount of fifty thousand pounds sterling.

Scenes and wrongs like these prompted the great raids of Hawkins and Drake upon the Spanish power, as the common enemy of mankind; and stirred the English conscience to a passion that even craved and courted martyrdom. For in 1581 we hear again of a Puritan mechanic from the south of England, one Richard Atkins, who went to make his protest first to the Jesuit College in Rome, where he was speedily delivered to the tribunal; then, being set free, — perhaps as being deemed insane, — went to repeat his protest by assailing the idolatrous service in St. Peter's, well knowing the fate it would lead him to. For when he was paraded half-naked through the streets,

and lighted torches were thrust against his bare flesh, he would grasp the torches in his hand, and hold them to his side, despising the pain, still exhorting the crowd in his broken Italian to faith in Jesus, and so went smiling to his martyrdom.

Charles Borromeo is the saintliest name of this era, perhaps of the whole modern Church of Rome. He is justly held in universal reverence for the sweetness of his piety, the simplicity of his self-devotion, the fidelity of his service as ecclesiastic and archbishop of Milan, the untiring charity and beneficence, courageous and heroic as well as tender, which, shown in a season of plague, has made his memory forever dear and venerable. Created cardinal at the age of twenty-two, he found himself, four years later, appointed judge of one Fra Tommaso di Mileto, a Franciscan monk, charged with such heresies as these: the lawfulness of eating meat on Friday; doubts about image-worship and indulgences; questioning of the Pope's authority; hints of predestination, and denial of the Lord's "true body" in the Host. And, besides minor penalties, here is the sentence rendered by this tender-hearted saint: "That you be walled up in a place surrounded by four walls, where, with anguish of heart and abundance of tears, you shall bewail your sins and offences committed against the majesty of God, the holy mother Church, and the religion of the founder St. Francis." *

The man thus cruelly immured succeeded in making his escape. But not so all. For, in the ruins of dismantled Inquisition prisons, skeletons have been

* Sentence rendered December 15, 1564. See Rule's "History of the Inquisition."

found in like "places surrounded by four walls," narrow cells, where the prisoner is supposed to have been confined upright, till he perished out of mere rottenness and misery.

Into other details of the horror of these dungeons, such as were laid bare in Spain, and afterwards in Rome, we need not enter. Our business is only with the Institution, and with the measures it demanded for its defence. The reform that goes under the name of "the Catholic reaction" was a campaign undertaken against the spirit of the age, — that is, against the clearest religious conviction and the most intrepid conscience of the time. And the measures it demanded were such as we have seen. The purest, the most pious and gentle, the most self-sacrificing saints of the Reaction were compelled to do that thing here described. There is no need to deny their piety or their tenderness of heart. But their piety did not stick at the gigantic murder of Saint Bartholomew. Their tender mercies did not shrink to wall live men, "with anguish of heart and abundance of tears," in the misery of that hideous sepulchre.

But I have said that the Church was conducting a campaign, and that it had in view a well-defined objective point. It is essential to our purpose to see, if we can, what was the nature of that objective point of the campaign. We have seen something of its arsenal and its weapons. We know something, through later history, of the extraordinary success of its warfare, in securing certain things which it really had at heart. We wish to know more exactly what those things were.

The completed structure of Modern Romanism, as distinct from Mediæval Catholicism, is understood to be the work of the Council which sat at Trent, in the Tyrol, at intervals from 1545 to 1563; including also, as corollary or supplement, the dogmas of the Immaculate Conception and of Papal Infallibility.

The first thing that strikes us, as we look at this result in a general way, is the policy it shows of a concentration, instead of an expansion, of the forces in the field. It is intensive, not extensive. Each definite step taken has served to narrow the field; to throw off a part of the apparent force, for the sake of a more vigorous grasp upon that which is left. Each point of doctrine established has been at the cost of a vehement interior struggle; it has been a triumph over opposition, with the risk and with the result of creating a great disaffected party. As long as the Immaculate Conception could be debated within the lines by Thomist and Scotist, the freedom of opinion was a ground of peace: since 1854, to follow the logic of their opinion, the great learning and strength of the Dominican Order should be lost to Rome. Infallibility might be ever so much the legitimate goal to which the Church was tending; yet its triumph, in 1870, cost it the formidable revolt signified in such names of learning as Döllinger, and such names of authority as Dupanloup.

And yet the Church, bound "for better for worse" to an idea, has not hesitated. It began by inviting Protestant attendance and co-operation in its Council; and the danger of compromises likely to follow was the chief hindrance to the Council's meeting, and the

chief cause of its delays. Doubtless it hoped — like a political caucus — to hold those bound by its decisions who should join in its debates. And there was something in the strangely compromising attitude of the Reformers — after Luther's death, especially, and under the irresolute lead of Melanchthon — which might justify that hope. But the concessions were soon found to be all on one side, — unless in such externals as in the very rare, doubtful, and reluctant allowance of the Cup to the laity. And the rigid fixing of its boundaries then, walled out all Protestant Europe as sharply, and with as little prospect of its recovery, as the previous walling off of the Eastern Church by the unyielding and intolerable claims of Rome.

But this narrowing of its ground was really, in another way, a policy of strength. Like the "Old-School Abolitionists" in the Antislavery crusade, the Roman Church has persistently denounced the least remonstrance or dissent within its lines; has unhesitatingly thrown over the faithfullest of friends, the moment his zeal seemed lukewarm, or his loyalty in danger of waxing cold. The great debate of Reason must be carried on within wide boundaries, and with open doors. The great battle of Faith must be fought with closed ranks, where a whisper of mutiny is death. A thousand blind partisans, so standing alone, are far stronger than the same number, increased by ten thousand more, who may dare question a word or act of the commander.

Besides, the selfishness of power must feel a certain relief at being discharged of responsibility for such

turbulent and intractable subjects as those in the populations of the North. Italy, Spain, and — at heavy cost — France were kept within the circle of command. But the war in the Netherlands must have taught the lesson which power is so slow to learn; and the truce of 1609 must have been as welcome to the assailants as to the assailed. The Scottish people under such a lead as that of Knox and Melville, the Puritans of England represented not merely by their fierce seafaring champions, but by such poor martyrs as Richard Atkins, multiplied by hundreds in every district, — such witnesses would give pause to the most towering ecclesiastical ambition. Such men would be far more dangerous as rebellious subjects than as alien enemies. And there is reason to believe that the modern Church of Rome has been well content with such success as it has had, which it would not wisely risk for a wider sway.

It is to the same effect when we look at the particular measures of reform aimed at. Still we find the sharper drawing of boundaries, the throwing off of the neutral or disloyal, the tightening of the reins of authority. The objects to be effected we find enumerated thus: to reinforce ecclesiastical Discipline among the clergy; to establish Seminaries for the instruction of youth, *with austere training* — in sharp contrast to the Mediæval University; to insure the incessant administration of the Sacraments in every parish, with special emphasis laid on preaching and auricular confession; to insist on the personal supervision of the clergy by the Bishop, to the restoring and enhancing of episcopal authority; and to make

more precise and ample the profession of faith, by authoritative exposition of the Creed, especially on the points then most debated, — justification, predestination, and sacraments.

Except in the last of these — which it was the special business of a Council to determine — there is absolutely nothing here which we can regard as an attempt to meet the case as it lay broadly before the secular intelligence of the time; nothing which indicates any attempt to win the lost ground, unless it might be by dint of armed conquest, when the forces of the faith should be sufficiently drilled. All looks to holding more securely and ruling more severely the ground that is within the visible boundaries of obedience; all looks to repelling more sharply those who chose to stay beyond those boundaries, and refusing more imperiously all suggestions of unity or peace.

Now this harsh and uncompromising attitude may be taken by a power, a party, or a person, perfectly convinced that a given position is absolutely right, and that to yield it would be a crime. That, in fact, is what the language of the Church necessarily means, — the very point in dispute between the Church and its opponents. It may also be held by a power aware that its position is weak in point of fact and of reason, and can only be made strong in logic: that is, whoever can be got to accept its premises may be held to abide by its conclusions. Either ground is sufficient to explain the attitude taken by the Roman Church during the Catholic reaction, and held by it since.

Virtually, this is to abandon the claim of Univer-

sality; since not the wildest dreamer supposes that the premises in question are going to be accepted by everybody. But, on the other hand, it is very greatly to brace and confirm the claims of Authority. By the theory of the Church, it regards all men, if not as the objects of its instruction, at least as the subjects of its rule. It demands not assent of the reason, but obedience of the will: at any rate, not assent first, and therefore obedience; but obedience first, and then assent. But obedience is a moral act, and is rendered to the object of one's moral homage or choice. How to win that moral homage, or choice, has not, so far, entered much into the Romanist conception of reform.

And yet there is a certain moral homage paid to the ministers of that Church, often in quarters we should least expect. The discipline of the Catholic reaction has had, unquestionably, a powerful effect on the lives of the humbler clergy, whose duties it has rigidly defined, and whose virtues it has energetically prescribed. They, at least, are not responsible for the craft of prelates, or for the atrocities which monastic rule has invented or put in force. Probably we shall never find a comparison between the morals of Catholic and Protestant countries intelligent and fair enough to satisfy both sides. The type, or standard, is the real object of comparison; and into this considerations of race, or the "personal equation," will enter too deeply to give much standing-ground in common.

But there are easily-recognized and very winning qualities, which have always distinguished the body of the lower Catholic clergy, and which have often been glorified in the more illustrious names of the

Roman Church. We must remember, it is true, that these virtues — charity, patience, humility, beneficence unstinted — are not inconsistent with policies and acts which we recoil from with horror. The saintly Borromeo was a merciless arbiter in the Court of Faith. The Port-Royalists were advocates of persecution, as well as sufferers from it. Fénelon, that pure type of sentimental piety, did not hold aloof from the policy of Louis XIV. in expulsion or in torment of the Huguenots.*

But in common, lowly, quiet life those qualities are inestimable, and infinitely dear. Once fallen below earthly ambition and hope, there is probably nowhere such wide-spread and abounding consolation as may be, or has been, found with the parish priest, or the saintly bishop. I do not know that a famous French romancer is the best of authority on points of moral judgment; but I have been more struck by the incidental and unintended testimony of Balzac to the reality of a certain "power that makes for righteousness" in the Catholic village clergy, than I should be with any amount of set argument to prove or disprove the same.

This power, whatever of it really exists, it is fair enough to call one result of the Catholic reaction which I have attempted to describe. We must make generous allowance for this on one hand, while we remember, because we cannot help it, the horrors and enormities of that reaction on the other hand. We are not called on to pass a verdict of "guilty or not guilty" on the Church of that day, or on the remark-

* See Douen, *L'Intolérance de Fénelon*. Paris, 1875.

able effort by which it recovered so much of its lost ground, and restored so much of its diminished strength. The single acts, the policies, the men, are fit objects of our judgment. The historical phenomenon at large is beyond that judgment. Our only business is to understand it, if we can, in the circumstances it grew out of, and the results it led to.

It did not defeat the Reformation. That had its message to deliver, and its prodigious moral power to transmit to the life of the modern world. But it did save to modern life something of the rich and deep life of a remoter time, which was in danger of being lost. And this it did, first, by drawing from sources of genuine religious life within the old sanctuary limits; then, by kindling with a new fervor a group or a series of men whose mental resource was equal to their zeal; and finally, by fixing in institutions and defining by formula and confirming by discipline certain moral forces derived from the fading life of the Middle Age, which thus make an element in the life of the world to-day.

There are a few ecclesiastical virtues precious, nay, indispensable, to mankind, the hardest of all to human nature, and so they are often by religious writers called "supernatural;" and these it was the service of the Catholic reaction to hold in trust for a larger religion, which we have not yet lived to see.

III.

CALVINISM.

CALVINISM as a system of thought has had its day. Two hundred years ago it was a very important factor in the opinions of mankind: by which I mean, opinions of the most advanced and most highly instructed thinkers, — Milton, for example, and Richard Baxter, neither of whom was strictly Calvinist in belief, while with both that system made the deep background of religious thought. But it is not too much to say now that nothing whatever of that importance is left. Intellectually, Calvinism is, so to speak, a dead issue. The real controversies of our time turn upon quite other points, and take no account whatever of it.

I do not mean by this that Calvinism has not believers at the present day, — believers in profession, and doubtless in reality, — perhaps as numerous, possibly more numerous, than ever. But the belief of advanced and aggressive thought is one thing; the belief of tradition, of assent, of apology, is quite another thing. Calvinism fifty years ago was standing on its defence. Now, except in the writings of its professional apologists, or in small local controversies, it is never alluded to or thought of except as a thing of the past. Look through every modern review,

scientific argument, work of philosophy, history, or general literature, — everything outside a narrow, technical, theological circle, — and scarcely its name, never once its dogma or its system of faith, will be found, except possibly as a reminiscence or an illustration. No philosophic writer of the present day ever thinks of the answer it gave once to the awful riddle of the universe, as the key to fit any one of those locks which bar from us the deeper mysteries of existence.

I say this in advance, lest I should be suspected of any sectarian or polemic motive in the review I shall attempt to take of Calvinism as a force in history. As a system of thought it is dead. But systems of belief, once strong and great, long retain their form and outward seeming after the life has gone out of them. It is dead, — not like a human body, which soon moulders and disappears ; but rather like a great hardy tree, which was girdled near the root many years ago. It puts forth no new branches. No green leaf has grown from its sap for many a spring. But as yet it is perished only in a few of its remoter boughs and twigs ; only a limb here and there has fallen to the ground from inner decay. Its shape is almost as sturdy and vigorous as ever. It gives almost as good shelter, to almost as many flocking under it, who look to it with almost as much reverence and awe as of old ; and the wreaths they hang upon its branches, or else the living vines they have twined about it, might almost persuade us that it is still alive. Such is the figure that best represents to us the condition in which we find Calvinism at the present day.

My task is, therefore, not to attack it and confute it, but simply to see why it grew up when and where it did, and what were its services to mankind while it was flourishing and strong. For I hold those services to have been very great. Indeed, it seems to me hardly too much to say that we owe to it, on the whole, the best and noblest features of the last three centuries, including our own. Its natural counterpart is what we call Liberalism. Now liberalism is a very enticing thing. It is, we may even say, the necessary condition of the advent of that new intellectual and moral life which we hope will one of these days do even better service to mankind than Calvinism has done. But as yet, if we will think of it, liberalism has very little to boast of in what it has done, however large its promise or its hope. Its coming we may take to have been inevitable, and its advance irresistible. Free thought found the creed of Calvin incredible; free conscience found his moral doctrine an offence; free religion found his interpretation of the divine decrees blasphemous and intolerable. The Reformation itself had set free a spirit that was thus sure, in time, to repudiate this its own most carefully constructed work. But, aside from this negative, provisional, and (as we may say) inevitable service, liberalism has done as yet no great thing for the human race, as Calvinism has done. Nay, what it seems to have done has been rather by setting loose other great forces, — literature, philosophy, science, zeal for popular right, — which have been the real teachers and workers.

Liberalism for the intellect we may take to be, like

freedom in politics, a privilege, an opportunity, a right, possibly a duty. But it may be slothful, complacent, sufficient to itself; or it may be strenuous, girded for work, armed for battle. Only in the latter case can it compare itself with the great forces that have wrought and fought in the field of history. And of these forces Calvinism is to be reckoned among the chief.

As to the man Calvin, and the opinions which make up his theological system, very few words need here be said. He was born in 1509, and died in 1564, at the age of fifty-five. Observe these dates. The first is the year when Henry VIII. became king of England; the last, the sixth of the reign of Elizabeth. Events on the Continent, particularly in France, are still more suggestive; but they are less familiar to us, and will not serve so well. We see, then, that Calvin's mature years were passed among the earlier preliminary struggles of the Reformation, but before its smothered passions burst out, as they soon did, into armed conflict on a great scale. He was born and educated a Catholic, in a provincial town of Northern France; had a lawyer's professional training, but with a strong leaning to theology; was marked very early by a keen, precocious ability; and somewhere about the age of twenty-three, or a little older, found himself a confirmed Protestant in belief. His special service as legislator, and in some sense ruler, almost dictator, at Geneva, then the city of refuge for opponents of the Roman Church, I need not dwell on; or on that strange and cruel yet consistent act of his administration, the burning of Ser-

vetus. It is only of his system of belief (sketched out, we must remember, at the age of twenty-six) — that sad, sharp, intolerant, uncompromising system known since by his name — that a few words are here required.

The turning-points of this system are the immutable Divine Decrees; the Fall of Man in Adam; inherited guilt, with native universal depravity; condemnation of the human race at large to endless misery; the rescue of the elect by the sacrifice of Christ; salvation by faith, in the strict technical definition of that phrase. These make the common ground of Protestant orthodoxy. The distinctive "Five Points" of Calvinism are absolute foreordination, natural inability (corruption of the will), irresistible grace, particular election, and perseverance of the saints.

Here let me say that the language of Calvin on these points is almost verbally that of Paul, though of course with immense dilation and repetition. His doctrine — by his dry, positive, legal style of argument, interpreting the record just as he would a statute or a will — is made out, fairly and logically enough, from the language of the Testament, especially that of the Epistles. The difference lies in two very important things. First, the language of Paul is that of a man of strong emotion, struggling with words to express his own religious experience, particularly his deep sense of contrition and dependence, — language which it is very dangerous to interpret by the rigid method of legal deduction, as Calvin has done. Secondly, Paul nowhere brings in the imagery of heaven and hell, which gives such fiery and lurid emphasis

to the later doctrine. The doctrine of Predestination was also put in strong and uncompromising terms by Augustine, the one Catholic theologian whom Calvin cites constantly and with respect. But it was reserved for Calvin to put it fairly in the front, and to state all its terms unflinchingly. It cannot be given better than in his own words. He says: —

"We assert, that by an eternal and immutable counsel God has once for all determined both whom he would admit to salvation, and *whom he would condemn to destruction*. We affirm that this counsel, so far as concerns the Elect, is founded on his gratuitous mercy, *totally irrespective of human merit;* but that to those whom he devotes to condemnation the way of life is closed by his own just and irreprehensible (doubtless), but incomprehensible judgment."*

He frankly acknowledges that the natural heart shrinks from this. "I confess," he says, "it is impossible ever wholly to prevent the petulance and murmurs of impiety." I should think so! But, as we see, he takes the bull fairly by the horns. Something may be added for effect upon the imagination in the frightful rhetoric of Jonathan Edwards's "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," or of Boston's "Fourfold State," but nothing of clear, definite appeal to the understanding. Now I venture to assert that no man living uses such terms at this day, with any serious attempt to attach distinct meaning to them. Will any of those who talk so fluently about endless torment, inflicted "totally irrespective of human merit,"

* *Institutes*, iii. 21, 7. The standard translation qualifies the sense by omitting the word "doubtless" (*quidem*).

say that they have ever tried to conceive even so much as the agony of a toothache, lasting six months together? Nay, they would think it a horrible thing to torture a dog needlessly for a quarter of an hour. Possibly we might have to except some cases of ignorant fanaticism, so far down in the intellectual scale that they never come within hearing of educated ears. But the common-sense as well as the common mercy of mankind has agreed to cover up these words, and the horrible images they suggest, with a decent veil of allusion and reserve.

We need not at all suppose that they were so shocking to Calvin and his contemporaries as they necessarily appear to us. The whole theory of sovereignty in the Middle Age was grim and cruel. If Richard of England or Philip "the Good" of Burgundy would sweep his rebellious provinces with sword and flame, and stay his hand only when he had spent his strength; if the sovereign of largest intelligence and finest political genius of all that time, Frederic II. of Germany, cut off his prisoners' hands and feet, put out their eyes, and so cast them into the fire; if the Christian Church did the same thing, as far as lay in its power (witness the bloody fields of Bohemia and the smoking ruins of Languedoc!) — what more natural than the notion that rebellion against the Almighty should be punished with like vengeance, and on an infinitely grander scale? Calvin's hell could never have been invented in a democratic republic.

Again, the penalty of treason specifically was that it wrought "corruption of blood." The children of

the guilty man were punished with him, or at least deprived of their inheritance. What more natural than to think that all the posterity of Adam were "attainted" by his guilt?

Again, the doom of heresy and schism — that is, rebellion against the spiritual power — was well understood to be death by fire. Those who heard, as a daily matter of fact, of the Spanish *autos da fé*, of which the smallest incident nowadays would chill us with horror and stir a tempest of avenging wrath; or who could stand quietly by, as they did in Geneva, to hear Servetus calling in his agony upon Christ, while his flesh was slowly crisped and shrivelled by fagots of green wood, — could not possibly feel the compunction and compassion which in a milder age have blotted out or at least covered up that hideous and blasphemous conception of Divine justice. The gentle Melanchthon gloried in that horrible business of Servetus, as a "pious and memorable example for all posterity!"

And, once more, the notion that happiness is, if not "our being's end and aim," at least every man's lawful pursuit, is quite a modern notion, never thought of in those days of almost universal physical wretchedness. Read of the horrors of the border wars of Flanders in the fifteenth century, or of those unspeakable miseries in the fourteenth that led to the outburst of the French *Jacquerie;* or listen to the pathetic simplicity of the German peasants' appeal in Luther's time for what to us are the merest primary rights of every man, even the criminal, the savage, or the public enemy, — and you feel at once

that you are in a time not only of different facts, but of different conceptions of the possibilities of those facts. Misery, as men saw on every side, was the natural, inevitable condition of a great majority of mankind. It was an easy generalization to say it was the natural or inherited condition of the human race for all eternity. The only notion of happiness or blessing as resting on physical condition that one could get then was in the lives of the few, who, by a privilege that seemed arbitrary and was certainly undeserved, were lifted into a position which contrasted with that of the vast majority almost as Paradise and the Pit.

It is important to bear in mind, then, that the Calvinistic conception of the Universe was the natural, all but inevitable reflection, upon the vast curtain of Immensity, of the only condition of things which men had seen as real, or perhaps had even thought of as possible. And the same reasoning which shows how inevitable that view was then shows also how and why it is impossible to-day.

I emphasize this view of Natural Evil, as it is reflected in the Calvinistic system, because it prepares us for that view of Moral Evil which was, after all, the root of the strength and tenacity we find in the system. Its power came, as Mr. Froude has forcibly shown, from its looking the facts of evil directly in the face; from doing its endeavor to work up those facts into a theory, and set them forth in an orderly and consistent plan.

After all, it is the evil in the world that wants asserting or accounting for, much more than the good

in the world. That bland optimism, which we are so apt to associate with the name of Liberalism, goes but a very little way, and satisfies us only for a very little while. Indeed, it is apt to lead straight to mental effeminacy and self-indulgence, and so rather to spoil us than help us for the good which it proclaims. It is a doctrine which could have originated only among the comfortable classes in a self-indulgent age. It is mere mockery and insult to the miserable classes, or in an age of struggle and suffering. Pope says, —

> "And spite of pride, in erring reason's spite,
> One truth is clear, *Whatever is, is right.*" *

The fact is, as every serious man sees, that most things are wrong, or at least stand in continual need of mending; and that it is the very business of our lives, from the daily tasks of housekeeping up (or down), to set as many of them right as we can, not to recite the praises of them as they are.

First of all, then, the strength of Calvinism lay in this, — that *it faced the facts.* It did not deny, it did not cover up, it did not explain away. Rather, it exaggerated the evil, projected it upon an appalling scale, made it the portal and key to a universe of horror. Its explanation was very frightful. To the modern mind it is both impious and incredible. But it came nearer to men's thoughts then. Above all, it came nearer to their experience, their passion, their

* Whatever Pope meant by this, he was at any rate a sharp satirist of a good many things in his own time, which doubtless appeared to him quite wrong. Most likely these lines are only a flourish, to glorify the fashionable philosophy of the day.

pain, their conflict, their fear. In this, then, — the terror and the pain that haunt so many of the deep places of human life, — it had the main foundation of its strength. What tenacious hold it had, we see in those words of sublime irony (as they come to us) which Milton set in the proem to his grand poetic exposition of that creed, whose motive is that he

> "may assert eternal Providence,
> And *justify* the ways of God to men!"

But not only, as opposed to a pious or epicurean optimism, it thus came nearer to men's experience. It came closer home to their sense of duty, too. Only in its degeneracy does Calvinism speak of men's being passive recipients of divine grace. In its age of vigor it meant an incessant, untiring, unrelenting war — war with sword in hand and hot hate and courage in the heart — against that Evil of which its only definition was "enmity to God." It is most important of all, in considering Calvinism as a force in history, to see it — like Bunyan's Pilgrim, its finest imaginative embodiment — in full armor and in fighting attitude. Calvin himself was a man of incessant, restless, strenuous activity; not a man to love, we should say, — irritable, dyspeptic, of thin acrimony, and morbid jealousies, and outbursts of passionate temper. Still, he was a man to respect in his way a good deal, and perhaps to fear a little.

But we have to consider not his personal character, which in most men, in its infinite details, is so much a matter of circumstance; rather, it is the stamp he put on the religion of his time, — that which closely allies itself with his outward activities and his thought.

That stamp is unmistakable. Nay, the very phrase "The Religion," used in his native tongue in distinction from the system of the Roman Church, means, simply and as matter of course, the system of Calvin. In its very nature it is aggressive. And this means that it is intolerant, narrow, antagonistic, fitted to attack.

Notice, too, that this fighting quality in Calvinism lies in its very fundamental dogma, of absolute Predestination. Can a serious man ever once think of salvation as resting on his own merit? If he has been snatched as a brand from the burning, he is the Lord's once for all, to do with as He will. In the white heat of that conviction all fears, all pains, all scruples disappear.* He may be a mere weapon of vengeance — as Poltrot, to cut off the cruel and crafty Duke of Guise. He may be a victim of oppression — but as Coligny, who writes to his wife very simply of some fresh outrage, that so the good Lord has seen fit once more to try his servants. He may be a mark of assassination — as Orange was for years; but utterly fearless, not taking even the simplest precaution, because he cannot fall till his time is come. Of that sword of Divine justice, which Calvinism was, we may say that the sharp point was the Eternal Decree, and that the two keen edges were Free Grace and Salvation by Faith.

But observe, again, that it is but a weapon, unfit for the services of peace. When peace comes, it

* "I had no more to do with the course pursued than a shot leaving a cannon has to do with the spot where it shall fall." — *John Brown.*

loses its temper, and must be beaten somehow into a pruning-hook. The Church of England asserts Predestination in its Seventeenth Article; but with a *caveat* against its dangerous use by "curious and carnal persons." The Synod of Dort adopts it, but with distinct mitigation of its rigid supralapsarian sense. The Westminster Assembly repeats it, but with a still more distinct protest against making God the author of evil, or impairing the moral liberty of man. We, for our part, think of the dogma chiefly for the great part it has played in human history, as "the sword of the Lord and of Gideon," by which the Midianites of that day were to be struck down.

The spirit and nature of Calvinism, just described, are best seen when we consider what were the objects of its attack. I shall mention two.

First, of course, was the Roman Church itself, — its whole system of doctrine and ceremony, of discipline, confession and absolution, and especially its claim of domination and supremacy. This Calvin attacked in his character as Protestant; and it is curious to see, in his treatment of it, how he loses that clear, impassive, legal tone which marks the rest of his exposition, and becomes acrimonious, thinly vindictive, and in point of fact slightly libellous. There was unquestionably good reason for this. No doubt the Protestants believed with all their hearts that Rome was Antichrist: their curious phrase "the scarlet woman" is pretty familiarly descriptive, down to our day. Calvinism was the sharp edge of Protestantism, and it meant attack. Considered in reference to some of its opinions, — such as its doctrine of the

Sacraments, then a very vital thing, — it may be called the religious radicalism of the day. And, taken so, it contrasts strongly with the conservative, politic, compromising temper of Lutheranism, which always made good friends with the powers of the world, and even, on occasion, allied itself with Romanism against its truculent and uncomfortable yoke-fellow.

Calvinism then, first of all, found itself committed to an unrelenting warfare against the Pope, as "the Man of Sin," and all his works. To trace this in detail would be to tell the story of the great religious wars, especially in France and the Netherlands, and the whole history of Puritanism in England. For the present, and to illustrate the stern consistency of its logic, I will only mention that the modern theory of Republicanism was sketched very early by a Calvinist of Geneva in a work carefully suppressed by his fellow-religionists, and reappeared from time to time among the Reformers until it came to full vigor under the English Commonwealth.* Besides this, as we know, it was Calvinism that laid the corner-stone of American democracy.

But, even without this challenge to the sovereigns of the day, the attitude of Calvinism was one then of very great daring. It was a sharp thorn in the side of the still mighty Empire-Church. It chose its home, or rather the spot for its intrenched camp, right on the frontier of Catholic France, right under the shadow of the mountains that bounded Papal Italy. Its his-

* A sketch of the early history of the republican doctrine, and its connection with the Calvinists of Geneva, will be found in Isaac Disraeli's *Life of Charles I.*, vol. ii. pp. 318–345.

tory for forty years before the great wars came is the very romance and adventure of religious biography, as full of romance and adventure as that of the Spaniards' struggle against the Moors. In the great wars, especially those of the Dutch in the Low Countries and of the Huguenots in France, what was its intrepid, fierce, unquenchable valor, there is no need to remind any who have heard the name of William the Silent, or Coligny, or Henry of Navarre,* whose battle against Rome was very literally battle to the death, — all three, victims of assassination directed by priestly hands. The one man who represents the largest thought and finest culture of Puritan England, John Milton, and the one man who represents the most sober and liberal opinion of the next generation, John Locke, can find no tolerance for papists in a free commonwealth. And the Calvinists who colonized New England could not suffer such a one to live among them. For their young State, as they well knew, Popery was in that day a thing of life and death.

The other object — possibly not of conscious hostility, but of real attack — was what it is customary to call "the spirit of the Renaissance," or, better perhaps, "the Pagan Revival." By this we mean, in a very broad way, that spirit of culture, learning, art, refinement, and personal luxury which came in during the two centuries before the Reformation, and has made so marked a thing in modern life.

* Observe that I say "Henry of Navarre," not "Henry IV. of France," which he became after his faith had gone out of him in the acceptance of a creed he never believed. But he was still man enough to resist intolerance, and to be honored with the deadly enmity of the Church.

One must read the eloquent tirades of Ruskin, to get — in a very idealized way, and with much superb rhetoric — a notion of the suspicion, hostility, and hate which this spirit provoked, at that time of earnest controversy, in all serious-minded men. Now we ourselves owe so much to this spirit of what is comfortable, beautiful, and refined in our daily life, and the new passion for adornment and the finer arts of luxury has taken so strong hold on our generation, that we are apt to think of the Calvinistic protest against it all as merely rude and barbaric. In two ways, however, it was something different, and was necessarily a part of the war against Evil, which was, so to speak, the essence of Calvinism. The first was the way of attack upon what is called Religious Art, used mainly for the decoration of churches, and so contributing to the vitality and strength of the system which Calvinism assailed as the great source of evil. This way led to the lamentable destruction of churches, statues, pictures, and other decorations, under the fury of reforming zeal, in England, Scotland, and the Netherlands. The second was directed against the spirit of revived Paganism itself, as expressed in literature and art generally. This is what we know as Puritanism.

Even religious Art, so called, from being wholly grave and serious, had become mere ostentatious luxury and splendor. The Reformers could not forget that the building of St. Peter's in Rome had occasioned that very scandal of indulgences which called out the first protest. The Pagan art which followed threw off all pretensions to sanctity, and with appalling frankness reproduced the most seductive

and sensual side of the Greek mythology, itself a degrading travesty of serious old myths of the primitive Aryan nature-worship. The trained mind of modern scholarship sees in those myths what they probably meant at first, — a sort of undisguised and unsophisticated poetry, dealing now with phenomena of earth and sky, now with what we should prefer to convey in physiological lectures and scientific treatises. But not so the emancipated thought of the sixteenth century, before modern popular science had begun to be. To this the old mythology had simply the charm of a certain fresh appeal to fancy, a sensuous grace and fascination, which long ages of monastic asceticism had covered out of sight; which issued forth, to the amazement and horror of serious-minded men, along with the revived classic learning.

The name of Rabelais is cited as the pioneer of this spirit in French letters. Its extreme degradation is to be found in the literature of a lower period, which may be fitly enough characterized by that succinct phrase of Scripture, "earthly, sensual, devilish." But without going down so low as that, it may be enough to mention the pictures of Correggio, as an example at once of the most exquisite grace that resides in grouping, coloring, and sentimental loveliness, as one sees in his fairest of Madonnas and his loveliest of infant cherubs; and, at the same time, of a subtly insinuated charm in his Pagan compositions, — his Ledas, Danaës, Ios, — a beguilement of merely sensual beauty, which to the stern iconoclast must seem that very "lust of the eye" against which he had declared unrelenting war.

In terms, I do not know that this war was ever outspoken against statues, pictures, and poetry, at least in Calvin's time. But it is plain that the Pagan revival, whatever its merits or its faults, had no more bitter and unpardoning enemy than the spirit of his followers. Now Art — duly limited to the fringing and adorning of the temple of life, or made the serious business of those to whom it is the natural language of thought, emotion, and fact — is a thing as good as it is beautiful. But as between that art which fills no small part of European galleries, and is fitly named Pagan, — as between that and the temper of mixed hostility and dread with which Calvinism met it, I have little hesitation in saying that Calvinism had the right. The witchcraft of that sensuous and seductive charm, and the hard, inexorable temper of that hostility are brought straight before us in the picture — so full of tender, mournful, tragical suggestion — of John Knox, stern and menacing, as he stands before the guilty Queen of Scots, whose feminine fears and fascinations shrink alike before the glance of that unpitying eye.

The foregoing illustrations are all we have time for now, to show the nature and spirit of the warfare in which Calvinism found itself engaged. Two views of it are still remaining to complete the outline of it which I have attempted to trace.

For the first we have the striking fact that Calvinism embodied all the aggressive, what we may call the positive, force of the Reformation westward of the Rhine. Lutheranism had in it from the start a certain spirit of compromise. It found its home in the North

German courts and populations, where its strength is to this day. Anglicanism is, at its broadest and best, a national and not a universal religion. Socinianism struck too directly, with its dry rationalism, at what was felt at the time to be the vital centre of Christian life; and its name, with whatever honor it really deserves for genuine piety and straightforward honesty, has remained ever since a byword of reproach, disowned by Unitarians and contemned by Orthodox.

The real strength of the Reformation lay in about half of France, till it was extinguished in a cruel religious war, and its relics were brutally trampled down, both before and after the "Revocation" of 1685; in the Netherlands, where it fought for fifty years the most obstinate and glorious fight on record, till it triumphed under Maurice and Barneveldt; in England, where Puritanism was the power behind the throne of Elizabeth, and its alliance of Presbyterian and Independent was victorious under Cromwell; in Scotland, where under Knox it forbade the banns of papist alliance with France, and established with Melville the most rigid system of instruction and discipline that ever constrained the energies of a valiant, restless, hard-headed, and intelligent people; in America, where the northern seaboard was held by a hardy and devout race of pioneers, who faithfully served God and man in a certain hard, forbidding way, held their own invincibly in the savage border-war waged on them by the Jesuit settlements of Canada, planted in little local liberties the germ of what has grown out into an immense political system, and communicated a certain astringent flavor to

the home-brewed piety, which you taste to-day from the briny waters of Maine to those of California.

All over the spaces just indicated Calvinism has given the tone and type of Protestantism, so that even the scientific Liberalism of the present day is perhaps best known by its antagonism to that. This predominance of the Calvinistic spirit appears very curiously in one thing, — the *sabbatarian* temper of all Protestant communities that have taken their tone from it. Now Calvin was by no means himself a sabbatarian, in our sense. When John Knox (I have read) once called upon him, he found him playing a game of ball on a Sunday afternoon, — a thing some of us liberals might rather hesitate to do. In Catholic countries, Sunday — at least half of it — is frankly made a holiday. It is hardly different in Lutheran countries: at least, I remember at Dresden a popular fair, with wild-beast shows and shooting at a mark, when the weary Sunday-morning service was done. In Puritan New England we have gone so far as to open free libraries and art galleries on that day, though by sufferance, as it were, and under strong protest. Calvinism — the system, not the man — is the source of that sad, still, ascetic observance of the day, more common once than now, and of calling it strangely by the Jewish name of *Sabbath*, instead of its Christian name of Lord's Day, or its good old heathen one of Sunday. It is, so to speak, the genius of the system, protesting in a certain blind, hard way against the spirit of the Pagan revival, — the spirit that rejoices in "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life;" that addicts itself to ungodly

and sensual delights; that loves Beauty for its own sake, and not merely, if at all, as a symbol of something else; that would multiply the pleasures of life, careless of the risk of incidental harm; that lets a childlike, unthinking joy in natural sights and sounds run too easily into an indulgence all the more dangerous, perhaps, because under the ban and outside the sympathy of excellent, scrupulous, self-denying, joyless men.

But, again, we find Calvinism not merely as an austere type of piety. It is also a fountain-head of stern, aggressive, self-sacrificing virtue, rising often to the heights of moral heroism, so necessary to brace up the tone of morals in an age of license, and even, at a crisis, to save the very life of a State, political as well as social. Take, for one type of it, the self-devotion shown in the missionary enterprise: divest it of the horrible dogma it proceeds upon, — that the souls of the unconverted heathen, without it, must drop incessantly, or rather pour, in a perpetual cataract of eighty thousand souls a day, into the gulf of endless perdition, — and see it only in its spirit of endurance, courage, sympathy, enthusiasm, such that to a young man looking forward to a career it shall seem the highest joy to die a martyr in tropical swamps (and I have myself known such); and where else shall we look for a type of character which does more honor to what is highest in human nature?

Or take, again, a movement like the Antislavery or Temperance crusade, — assuming, as under the conditions of human society we may fairly do, that at a given time and place such a crusade is necessary, —

and where shall we find the agents and weapons for such a warfare, hearts hot and valiant, weapons tempered and keen, except from that enormous reservoir of moral power which it has been the great mission of Calvinism to keep from running dry? As an intellectual system (as I began by saying) its day is long past. But as a moral force, there was never perhaps more need than now of the spirit it represents. The forms of Puritanism cannot long survive; but from the heart of it, even yet, are some of the best issues of our life.

And this leads me directly to the last point of which I propose to speak. The system of Calvinism is certainly destined to pass away, and possibly before very long, in the revolutions of human thought. I do not think it needs any argument to show this to a thoughtful and observant person, and I shall offer none. But, if we will think of it, its passing away is a very serious thing, and one not altogether, perhaps, to be received with cheers and shouting. That depends greatly on what is coming to take its place. Now I am as far as possible from any partiality to the scheme itself. I learned early in childhood to dread and dislike the mean temper of petty persecution it had run into, to think of it as the one thing to be resisted in the field of religious thought. It is only by reflection and a wider view of things that I have come to see it in the light I have attempted to throw upon it. This shows bearings in the matter not so clear before.

There are three great Scottish names, which may stand for three phases of the very difficult question I have tried to state.

A hundred years ago, in Scotland, Calvinism had run out, in many quarters, into a dry, intolerant dogmatism, hard alike to all free thinking and to all free joy in life. It was little past the middle of the life of Robert Burns, then a youth of twenty-one, with sixteen years yet before him to live as a man. We know what that system made of him: the bitter protest, the pitiless satire, the mocking unbelief, all hot from an honest heart; and, along with them, the disrepute, the loss of self-respect, the reckless indulgence, that clouded and blurred his splendid genius, until he died in early manhood, discarding and discarded by the austere creed that had been the glory and strength of Scotland in her heroic days. To quote the pathetic language of his biographer, who is also both his eulogist and his countryman, —

"He has no religion. In the shallow age where his days were cast, religion was not discriminated from the New and Old Light *forms* of Religion, and was, with these, becoming obsolete in the minds of men. His heart, indeed, is alive with a trembling adoration; but there is no temple in his understanding. He lives in darkness, and in the shadow of doubt. His religion, at best, is an anxious wish, — like that of Rabelais, a great Perhaps."

A few years later, we have the illustrious example of Thomas Chalmers, — in religious energy, after Knox, probably the greatest son of Scotland. With him, after a period of mere formal belief, the system came home with personal conviction; and all the force of his powerful nature went out into the glorious work he did in his Glasgow parish of twenty thousand souls, — one of the grandest proofs of what moral

forces were latent there, allied with the ancient faith, and of what one live strong man can do for men.

Again, after one more generation, we have the shrewd thinker, the sad humorist, the cynical philosopher, the marvellous expounder of history, the vigorous declaimer against all sorts of mental effeminacy and self-indulgence, the despairing prophet of England's future, Thomas Carlyle, — whose deeply religious nature still keeps loyal to the memory of his early faith; who refuses to think of religious things except in the phrases and formularies of the Calvinism he has outgrown; whose immense range of culture makes his old beliefs impossible, while the stern, sad tone of them survives in the bleak pessimism, the disdain of human weakness, the haughty deference to a mere mighty or else almighty Force, that have given him his unique place among men of letters.

I bring these names together not for their likeness, but for their unlikeness, yet all as illustrations of what we have to think of when old things are passing away and all things are becoming new. They bring straight before us, in a threefold way, the variety of influences that may flow out from a system nominally one. They suggest what will perhaps appear, if we think of it, the gravest question a thinking man can ask himself, — how, in parting from outgrown and pernicious error, we may yet keep the Truth, which converts the soul and saves the world.

Of those three greatest Scottish names of the last hundred years, — greatest, certainly, as representing personal or moral force, — the first was unquestiona-

bly the finest genius. The second was noblest in personal character, and of best — at least, most devoted — service to his own immediate generation. But of Carlyle this in particular may be said: that his is at once the most powerful and the manliest influence that has gone out upon the English mind of our time. Sometimes, indeed, it seems hard to imagine what form or degree of effeminacy might not have held the field but for that one influence. Wrong-headed, violent, eccentric, unjust at times, his voice has rung like a trumpet against everything cowardly, degenerate, and base. Scornfully intolerant of religious bigotries, hypocrisies, and false pretensions of every sort, his prodigious personal force has always weighed, if not for the gentler humanities, at least against the cruel inhumanities, of modern life.* That wholesome, bracing, pungent, northern air has swept before it many a reeking fog and poisonous exhalation. And when we think of the manliest and soundest word that is spoken to-day in the English tongue on any one of the great questions that lie open, — political, moral, philosophical, religious, — we think first of "Past and Present," of those marvellous Histories, of those volumes of Carlyle's "Essays;" and to these we add the small but vigorous group that, with something of his wilfulness, have showed something also

* It is a pity to have to except from this the ignorant and contemptuous tone in which Carlyle always spoke of American slavery, and of our civil war. Still, something may be pardoned to his hatred of that cant to which such distant issues were nearer than the sufferings and inhumanities close at home. And Carlyle's honest hostility was at least better than Kingsley's surprising conversion when the crisis came which he had just been preaching to us to meet like men.

of his strength, — among them Charles Kingsley, and John Ruskin, and James Anthony Froude, and Ralph Waldo Emerson.

I would not go to Carlyle — so far as I know or care — for a single opinion upon any topic, or for sound judgment on any historical person or event. Mere contact with that powerful intelligence is the one sufficient thing. It illustrates better than anything else I can call to mind the immortal soul that survives from a body of opinion intellectually dead. Such mental virility is one more item of the great debt our generation owes to the faith which nurtured it and made it possible. It confirms the hope that, while the system associated with the name of Calvin must pass away, the mental vigor, the moral courage, the intolerant hate of Evil under all disguises, the stern loyalty to Truth, will yet remain, an imperishable possession of mankind.

IV.

THE PURITAN COMMONWEALTH.

COMMONWEALTH is good old English for that later and much abused word "Republic," which hardly once appears * in the writings of the time we are considering. And it expresses, better than any other term, the oneness of life, the community of interest, the reciprocity of rights and duties, what in modern phrase we have learned to call the "solidarity," of the State. The term "Commonwealth" is therefore as near a rendering as we can easily get, from the modern, human, or political point of view, of the old religious phrase "Kingdom of Heaven," which made the first Christian ideal of human society.

It is probable that the complete break-down of the Mediæval theory, which sought to realize this ideal by its splendid fiction of a universal Empire-Church, had much to do with the suddenness and the passion with which this new ideal, at once political and religious, took possession of serious minds. That "the kingdoms of this world should become the Kingdom of our Lord" was no longer possible, nor could it be even hoped for, under the old ecclesiastical rule.

* "Republic" is cited as used in poetry by Drayton and by Ben Jonson. It is not found in Shakspeare, who uses the word "commonwealth" or its equivalent "commonweal" nearly forty times.

And so, as soon as the fury of ecclesiastical strife had abated, before the faith in a divinely revealed order of government had waned, there grew up, naturally, a form of opinion which held that the constitution of human society itself must be avowedly religious, and Jesus Christ the only rightful king. So he had been proclaimed by Savonarola in Florence; and so Antinomian and Anabaptist fury had declared, with savage fanaticism, in the era of the Reformation. It was a natural sequel that, when Puritan Reform had once got the ascendency in England, the name in which it proclaimed itself was "Commonwealth;" and its most consistent zealots, the Fifth Monarchy Men, "looking on the Covenant as the setting Christ on his throne, seemed," says Burnet, "to be really in expectation every day" when He should personally appear.

Besides, the great discoveries that came just before the time of the Reformation had stimulated men's imagination, as well as widened the visible horizon. The New World invited out their fancy, to play in dreams of a social state pure from the violences and wrongs with which the Old World was too familiar. More's "Utopia" and Bacon's "Atlantis" are both in the vague wonderland beyond the sea.* These dreams are crude and vague, as we might expect. The communism of Utopia, which is a sort of humanitarian Sparta, is upheld by such innocent devices as making gems into children's baubles, and fabricating from the

* It is curious to note that in "Utopia," which was written while the discoveries were very fresh, Americus Vespucius is the recognized explorer, while Columbus is quite unknown.

precious metals vessels of dishonor and chains for slaves. But there are noble and kindly thoughts of a State which (as our modern States profess) should feed the poor, cure the sick, and care for the public health; while, in contrast to the ecclesiastical terror under which men groaned, perfect freedom of conscience is a fundamental right of every man.

The ideal Commonwealth, as distinct from the political forms of a Republic, happens to have had a peculiar fascination for the best English minds. Perhaps it is easier to idealize the life of a nation so completely rounded and separated in its boundaries as Britain. Shakspeare often makes us think so, in his splendid appeals to the honor and pride of England. And in this Shakspeare is the voice of that great age of national uplifting in which he lived. Moral idealism, however, was no part of Shakspeare's faculty, and to anything like religious heroism he felt a distinct repugnance. He nowhere shows human character on anything so high a level as we see it in some of his great contemporaries, — Sidney, Orange, and Coligny, to say nothing of those humbler countrymen of his, the Puritan martyrs. His hero-prince was the vindictive persecutor of the Lollards, as well as the truculent and unscrupulous invader of France. It was martial and feudal England that kindled his fancy, not any large dream of what England might come to be, as a land of organized liberty and justice,

> "Where freedom broadens slowly down
> From precedent to precedent."

For that, we go to a class of minds less poetic and

impassioned, more vigorous and masculine, dealing more closely with the outworking of the nation's political and social life.

Quite in contrast to the way in which the idea of a Commonwealth was afterwards worked out, we find it first illustrated in a series of aristocratic names. Sir Thomas More, Sir Philip Sidney,* Sir Walter Raleigh, and Sir Francis Bacon are the men we should have to study, if we would learn the earlier phases which that idea took in English thought. These names, at first view, represent the pride and vigor of a ruling class, much more than they do the popular sympathy or the religious ardor which proved the working forces in that field.

And their fortunes were singularly apart from any such achievement. More died a martyr of his fidelity to the Pope against the King. Sidney perished the victim of ill-advised bravery on a petty foreign field. Bacon "chose all learning for his province," and became a great light to the secular understanding of his age, strong to think and very weak to execute. Raleigh was kept for those years of his life which should have been his noblest and best close prisoner in the Tower, and at length lost his head, partly (it would seem) on suspicion of the bigoted and jealous James, that he had schemed an aristocratic Republic

* This motive in Sidney is best seen in his Letters, especially that addressed to Walsingham. One who has attempted to traverse the tiresome pathways of his "Arcadia" is surprised to learn that it is "a continual grove of morality, shadowing moral and political results under the plain and easy emblems of lovers." This at least shows what Sidney's character and motive were believed to be by those who knew him.

which should set aside the ill-omened succession of the House of Stuart.*

It is, indeed, tempting to reflect what the history of England might have been with Raleigh for an earlier Lord Protector; if that evil succession had been set aside for a brilliant secular Republic, whose constitution-maker had been Bacon, its poet Shakspeare, and its executive chief the heroic Prisoner himself. And something of this, it is not impossible, may have been among the thoughts of his long captivity.

It is this same aristocratic tradition, strong against the divine right of Monarchy, which we find long after in Harrington, whose "Oceana" is a hardly disguised England of the Commonwealth, — under an idealized Protector, — resented by the real Cromwell as a lecture of political pedantry aimed at him; and in that haughty and choleric scion of nobility, Algernon Sidney,† who speculated at large, under the Restoration, of the supreme authority of Parliament above any King, — speculations which brought him to the block in 1683. Cromwell, says Burnet,‡ "studied to

* "At a consultation at Whitehall after Queen Elizabeth's death," says Aubrey, "how matters were to be ordered, and what ought to be done, Sir Walter Raleigh declared his opinion, 't was the wisest way for them to keep the staff in their own hands, and set up a Commonwealth." — RALEIGH: *Works*, vol. viii. p. 740.

† A characteristic anecdote of him is that, when in France, a very fine horse he rode attracted the eye of King Louis, who offered a generous sum for its purchase. Refusing this, and seeing that the wilful king would have his way, he dismounted and shot the horse through the head, saying that the noble creature had borne a freeman hitherto, and should never be the slave of a despot.

‡ In the "History of his own Times."

divide the Commonwealth party among themselves, and to set the Fifth Monarchy Men and the enthusiasts against those who pretended to little or no religion, and acted only upon the principles of civil liberty, such as Algernon Sidney and Harrington."

But these proud and great men did not guess the forces which were preparing to give a triumph to the revolutionary idea, which they could imagine as little as they could share. The Reformation had been taken very much to heart by the English people, in a form which the sovereigns of the Reformation regarded with about equal alarm, jealousy, and contempt. The Lollards had had their early martyrs under the writ "for burning heretics," passed by the House of Lancaster, and cruelly put in force by the House of Tudor. Before Elizabeth had been six years on the throne, the name "Puritan" began to be known in something of the sense, political as well as religious, which made it afterwards so formidable. Elizabeth doubtless disliked the Puritans more, though she happily feared them less, than she did the Papist conspirators against her life. She knew, she said, what would content the Papists; but never knew what would content the Puritans. Whitgift, her "little black husband" as she called him, schemed and partly effected an English prelacy as arbitrary and despotic as that of Rome. And she thought, no doubt, to checkmate the rising spirit of Republicanism, as much as to maintain the divine right of the Queen she had beheaded, when she signified that the crown must pass to James.*

* Sometime towards the end of her life cheers had been given

The visionary aristocratic Commonwealth at once collapsed. Whatever hopes the Puritan party may have had in a king of Presbyterian training were suddenly crushed at Hampton Court (1604), where James conceived and uttered his famous phrase, "No bishop, no king." Episcopacy became more and more the fast ally of Monarchy, leading straight to the "Thorough" policy of Laud and Wentworth (1629–1641). To Laud's phrase "Thorough" the Puritans soon opposed their own "Root-and-Branch." Parties so minded have not long to wait for a cause of quarrel; and the Presbyterians were the first to declare openly against the King.

But behind the political conflict which drifted fast towards the Great Rebellion was the religious motive, kept fresh and hot by sharp repressions on one side, increasing fanaticism on the other. The Presbyterians would have made a party of aristocratic reform, vigorous and resolute for political ends, but loyal, if possible, to the King. True Puritanism, with its intensity of religious zeal, and its contempt of precedent and consequence, went over more and more to the ranks of the Independents.

The Independents, as Bacon in his large intelligence had regarded them, were "a very small number of very silly and base people, here and there in corners dispersed." The large intelligence, which had taken all knowledge to be its province, was quite blind to that

for the Queen *and State :* "this the Queen saw and hated." — DISRAELI : *Life of Charles I.* chap. xii. The great struggle for the independence of the Netherlands was having its effect on the English popular imagination.

power (not of knowledge but of faith) which consists in the fervent heat of religious conviction, not in the dry light of human science. In another generation, the "very silly and base people" had grown so as to furnish regiments of Ironsides, which triumphed under Cromwell at Naseby and Marston Moor, in 1645;* and from that date Puritanism was master of the field for fifteen years.

One of the "corners" into which Independency had been dispersed, was that obscure birthplace of our Pilgrim Colony, Scrooby in Nottinghamshire, whence the persecuted congregation fled to Holland in the early years of James (1608). It was just when the successes of the Netherlands forced Philip of Spain to a twelve years' truce, which gave great hope not only of peace but of religious liberty. When the wiser heads, such as Barneveldt's, saw the ominous approach of the dreaded war which was to afflict Europe for thirty years, — perhaps, too, we may add, when the Synod of Dort, by its condemnation of the patriot Barneveldt, showed that religious liberty was no longer to be hoped for, — it was time for the little congregation to plan and carry out its daring winter migration to America.

The fortunes of the Plymouth Colony would take us too far from the path we have to follow. Only it should be said, just here, that that Colony was strictly in the line of advance which the best religious thought

* This is the date given by Hallam for the first appearance of republican ideas in Parliament. But, as his words imply, the idea of the Commonwealth, both political and religious, is much older than that.

of England was making towards a Commonwealth. It was meant to effect "the practical part of Reformation." Its motive was not simple freedom of worship, as is sometimes said, but to create "a civil body politic." Its first corporate act was not ecclesiastical, but political: it was to form that "Covenant" which was, in fact, the earliest formal organizing of Democracy. The powerful attraction of this idea is seen in the fact that the task of colonizing was virtually completed within twenty years; and the vigor and effect with which it was done is seen in the fact that from those who came then were born (it is reckoned) no less than a third of the entire population of the United States as it existed before the Civil War. The tenacity of purpose which carried the nation through that awful struggle in our own day was in the most literal sense the strain of the same blood that flowed in the Puritan Commonwealth of Cromwell.

The governing idea on both sides the ocean, quite as much republican as religious, meets us constantly in the early records of New England. We find it in the incessant reference to Christ — not the Church — as the real authority in religious things. We find it in a certain jealousy of clerical control in matters of general concern, — as marriage, which is made a civil contract, not a sacrament. It is political sagacity, quite as much as any particular intensity of religious feeling, which prescribes that the infant Commonwealth shall be not only Christian, but Congregational; which identifies citizenship with church-membership; which even goes into the sphere of personal

religion, by demanding a declaration of "the work of grace" from every candidate for the political franchise. It was the apprehension of civil disorders which, growing out of sectarian division, might be fatal to the Colony, — not ecclesiastical bigotry and oppression, — that checked the rising rage of controversy by the cruel exile of Ann Hutchinson and Roger Williams, and afterwards of the Quakers.

It was, again, the spirit of Independency that took the alarm, when the Presbyterian party, victorious in Parliament, undertook to found a national establishment, in which the church-polity of the Covenant with Scotland should be enforced upon all subjects and colonies of England; and that, to foil what it deemed a dangerous plot, sent its envoys into England, where, in 1645, they joined hands with the Independents, just now victorious under Cromwell.

Thus Congregationalism remained the established Order, in State as well as Church, till in 1662 the new Charter of Charles II. required that all should be recognized as equal citizens who were "orthodox in their religion, and not vitious in their lives." Even in our own day, and since the disappearance here of the last relic of the ecclesiastical establishment in 1833, something of the old jealousy remains, which has prevented the Presbyterian Order from gaining any strong foothold in New England; and the name Commonwealth still remains the official title of the two oldest of our States.*

* Massachusetts and Virginia. It will be noticed that the latter in its history represents the aristocratic republicanism of Raleigh, as the other does the religious democracy of John Robinson.

But the Commonwealth, as an outgrowth of the Reformation, does not belong to England alone, or to the party we know as Puritan. It was in a broader sense the spirit of that revolutionary age. The beginnings of Democracy in Europe have been referred to Calvin's "Discipline," which displaced the old aristocratic rule in Geneva, and was carried over by John Knox into Scotland. One might even plausibly suppose that it had an earlier origin yet, and was allied with some tradition of the stormy democracy of the Italian and Flemish towns in the Middle Age. Its new birth, at any rate, was due to the immense religious revival, and to the revolutionary passions of the century of the Reformation. The Peasants' War and the disorders of the Anabaptists had brought to the front a complete code of democratic socialism in Luther's time, which with much pains had been bloodily suppressed. These were among the earliest first-fruits of the new liberty.

In France, the Protestant cause had kept on living terms with the Monarchy till the fatal date of 1559, when the kings of France and Spain entered into their secret treaty for its extirpation,* and the ill-concerted plot of Amboise in the following year, which gave the Court its pretext for cutting off the chief heads of that cause. As early as 1574 — stimulated, no doubt, by the monstrous murder of St. Bartholo-

* This was the famous treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis, whose secret was unwarily betrayed to William of Orange, and his wary keeping of the secret earned him the celebrated title of "the Silent." See Motley's "Dutch Republic," and Baird's "History of the Rise of the Huguenots of France."

mew — writings were widely circulated in France, questioning or denying all royal authority, except what was founded in the public good.* It may have been by royalist reaction, or it may have been a bitter satire on the maxims of monarchy in that day, when a counter-memorial, addressed to Catherine de Medicis, set forth the methods of a perfect despotism on the model of Turkey, — a despotism which would suppress all class privileges, reduce all subjects to an absolute level, and admit no right of property, even, in private hands; asserting that all wealth should (as in the imperial times of Rome) belong in full ownership to the king.† These symptoms, emerging amidst the wars of religious passion, and the terrors of conspiracy and massacre, show that dissensions perilously radical, touching the very source of justice and the foundation of authority, were fast coming to the front.

One effect of these dissensions was to foment that obstinate feud between the Court of France and some of the most powerful nobles which gave the Huguenot party its military chiefs, which made it distinctly a political as much as a religious party, which intoxicated it with the dream and the fatal ambition of creating a Reformed Republic by partition of the realm, or even by league with Spain. It is not likely that any of these noble chiefs — the Bourbons, the Rohans, and the Condés — cared much for the Refor-

* See De Thou, book lvii., chap. viii.

† Disraeli thinks that the proposal was "bitter satire." But it does not go at all, in theory, beyond the doctrine asserted by the "thorough" advisers of Charles I. See Hallam, chap. viii.

mation religiously: in a generation or two these great Houses were frankly in alliance with the Roman Church. For forty years or more, however, the Protestant cause in France aimed distinctly at a republic, both military and aristocratic, — which at one time it seemed fairly to have established, when the murder of Henry IV. left that for their only chance. But Richelieu's policy — unity of France and suppression of the nobles — was carried out with that appalling severity and craft which soon paralyzed all enemies of the Monarchy; and the kingdom lay disarmed before such exercises of royal policy as the Revocation of the Edict of Toleration in 1685.

The political by-play between the courts of France and England, and the dread of something very like a popish league between the two, must count for something in the deadly wrath and suspicion of the Reforming party, which drove Charles from all his defences, and forced the issue of a Puritan Commonwealth. The parliamentary leaders would have been satisfied with their defeat of Royalty in the death of Strafford. The Presbyterian clergy would have been satisfied with their defeat of Prelacy in the death of Laud. But the Independents had another end in view. The execution of the king was closely followed by the suppression of the House of Lords, and the lodging of all power with the Commons, — which soon proved the supremacy of the Army and of its plebeian Chief.

We have nothing here to do with the political story, or with that crafty policy of Cromwell which suffers in our esteem by nothing more than by what Carlyle

meant for its vindication, — the bare assertion of unscrupulous and remorseless will. The real vindication of Cromwell is partly a great name which, like a bonfire, shines with a clearer blaze as you get farther away from it; but, still more, that he kept to the last the steady admiration and esteem of the one man who represents to us in all its splendor the political and religious ideal of his day, and has left to the great Protector, for all after time, the verdict of that grand phrase, "Our Chief of Men."

Milton is one of the few heroic names in literary history. Both in the romance of his early verse and in the lofty severity of his great poem, he is naturally compared to Dante. But his real greatness, more distinctly and far more purely than that of Dante, is in the sphere of action, — not in active politics, and not in the field, but in acting through his writings upon the mind and temper of his time. There is no other great name in letters that would suffer so much injustice if judged mainly by literary standards. Literature, as such, he distinctly renounced, when it came to the deliberate choice of the work of his manhood. All the splendid promise of his youth; the personal gifts that made him welcome among the best poets and scholars of his time, in Italy as well as England; the scholarly culture, fostered by his father's wise indulgence, ripe and deliberate as few young men have ever had the mind or time for; the accomplishments of the day, including music, and such skill in fencing that "the lady of his college" (as for his shapely beauty he was called) could give a good account of himself with his weapon "to a much stouter man,"

he says, if he had been wantonly attacked; the ambition and the dream of his early life, that he "might perhaps leave something so written to after-times, as they should not willingly let it die," — all this was his, only to enhance the value of the gift he brought, when he made haste to offer his life to the service of the nation. He had "determined to lay up as the best treasure and solace of a good old age the honest liberty of free speech from his youth." *

In all literary biography there is probably not another example so splendid, of the sacrifice which a mind so trained must find it hardest of all to make. The five years following his college life had been spent "in the quiet and still air of delightful studies;" and that rare training was to be completed now by some years of travel upon the Continent, especially in Italy and Greece. He was still in Italy, where he was taken at once to the heart of the most noble and cultivated circles; and Athens, still glorious with the undiminished splendors of the Parthenon, was waiting to be visited, — when the news came that the struggle had begun which was to lay the foundation of a free Commonwealth in England.† It is in referring to this

* The autobiographical hints in which Milton speaks with an unreserve which few authors have ever ventured, are in the Introduction to the Second Part of "Reasons of Church Government urged against Prelaty" (1641), and in the "Second Defence of the English People," composed in 1654, after his blindness. The symptoms of his blindness are described in the fifteenth of his "Familiar Letters."

† "While desirous to cross over into Sicily and Greece, a sad message from England of civil war called me back. For I held it base to be travelling at ease, for my own fancy, when my countrymen

time — when the dreams of youth must be harshly put aside for the tasks of manhood — that Milton uses those remarkable words to define the nature of the call he was obeying: "But when God commands to take the trumpet and blow a dolorous or jarring blast, it lies not in man's will what he shall say, or what he shall conceal."

He was now (1639) at the age of thirty-one; and for more than twenty years — that is, throughout the vigor of his manhood — all his thought, all his strength, and finally his eyesight, were deliberately given up to what he regarded as a sacred service. Anxiously as he was warned of blindness by his friends, he would not, he says, "have listened to the voice of Æsculapius himself, but to a diviner monitor within." To enable himself to do his task with honest independence, he undertook the very uncongenial drudgery of instructing boy-pupils in his own house, where his irascible and haughty temper, Dr. Johnson thinks, made the charge about equally painful to master and pupil.* It is this laborious life, chosen and lived for years, till the Commonwealth appointed

at home were fighting for liberty." — *Defensio Secunda.* This was in 1639. War was not actually on foot till three years later. The terms he uses are, however, explicit: *belli civilis nuntius.*

* The Puritan temper in such self-denials is pleasantly given in Morse's Memoir of J. Q. Adams: "The fact that such action involved an enormous sacrifice would have been to his mind strong evidence that it was a duty; and the temptation to perform a duty, always strong with him, became ungovernable if the duty was exceptionally disagreeable."

Milton, says Aubrey, "pronounced the letter *r* very sharp, — a sure sign of a satirical disposition."

the obscure but eloquent schoolmaster for its Latin Secretary of State, which makes the true commentary of those lines in Wordsworth's noble sonnet: —

> "Thy soul was like a star, and dwelt apart:
> Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea:
> Pure as the naked heavens — majestic, free —
> So didst thou travel on life's common way
> In cheerful godliness; and yet thy heart
> The lowliest duties on herself did lay."

Milton is our highest example of a *consecrated* intellect in the field of letters; and it will not be amiss to copy here, familiar as they are, the lines in which he has recorded the earlier and the later form of his consecration. The earlier is in the flush of his young hope, at the age of twenty-three: —

> "Yet be it less or more, or soon or slow,
> It shall be still in strictest measure even
> To that same lot, however mean or high,
> Toward which Time leads me, and the will of Heaven.
> All is, if I have grace to use it so,
> As ever in my great Task-Master's eye."

The other is what he had learned to say in the calm but stern composure of later years, in blindness, old age, desertion, penury, and pain: —

> "God doth not need
> Either man's works or his own gifts. Who best
> Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best. His state
> Is kingly: thousands at his bidding speed,
> And post o'er land and ocean without rest.
> They also serve, who only stand and wait."

There is no author, again, whom it is more necessary to judge by that ideal which he kept so loftily pure, which he worshipped with so absolute a homage,

and so austerely true a consecration. For, as soon as we judge him by any common standard, we find that this heroic temper has its faults, which give the unfriendly critic only too easy a handle. His political writings, it must be confessed, are often turbulent, unreadably tedious, even virulent sometimes, under the stress of personal controversy as it was then carried on. Something of this last may be pardoned, when we remember the insults brutally cast against his blindness, and the calumny that wantonly assailed his morals.

We do not expect, either, to gain political instruction from such a mind. "His scheme of government is that of a purely ideal Commonwealth, and has the fault common to the greater part of such conceptions, that it never could be practised except among beings for whom no government at all would be necessary."* It is just as well to begin by admitting thus much, so as to clear the way for recognizing the qualities which put his controversial writings in the very front rank of English prose, and make them, on the whole, a grander monument of his genius than all his verse. At least they are a monument more unique and distinct than any that he has built in verse; while they are at once the complement and the commentary by which we read what is most characteristic in his poetry.

It is not, however, as a man of letters that we are to regard him here, but as the interpreter to all time of the profoundest conviction and passion of his age. Indeed, when we take together the heat, the glow, the splendor of diction, and the lyrical bursts of

* Sterling's Essays.

religious eloquence here and there, we have to go as far back as the Hebrew Prophets to find anything to compare fitly with these remarkable writings.

The finest examples which best illustrate this last quality would require too much space to copy here. They are passages which Macaulay calls "a perfect field of cloth of gold. The style is stiff with gorgeous embroidery." In particular the prose Ode (as it has been called) in the form of prayer, which ends the first of his essays, "Of Reformation in England," is perhaps the most extraordinary illustration to be found anywhere of poetic and religious genius in perfect blending, kindled to a white heat in the very stress of controversy by the ardor of a passionate devotion to the interest at stake.

A few sentences, however, it is necessary to give, to show how this interest was identified in Milton's mind with that idea of a Christian State which made the finest inspiration of Puritanism. He says, —

"A Commonwealth ought to be but as one huge Christian personage, one mighty growth and stature of an honest man, as big and compact in virtue as in body."

And again, of the Puritan Colonies across the sea : —

"What numbers of faithful and free-born Englishmen have been constrained to forsake their dearest home, their friends and kindred, whom nothing but the wide ocean and the savage deserts of America could hide and shelter from the fury of the bishops! Oh, Sir, if we could but see the shape of our dear mother England, as poets are wont to give a personal form to what they please, how would

she appear, think ye, but in a mourning weed, with ashes on her head, and tears abundantly flowing from her eyes, to behold so many of her children exposed at once, and thrust from things of dearest necessity, because their conscience would not assent to things which the bishops thought indifferent?"

Again he says, —

"Let us not, for fear of a scarecrow, or else through hatred to be reformed, stand hankering and politizing, when God with spread hands testifies to us, and points us out the way to our peace." *

The finest examples of Milton's political eloquence — one is tempted to say, the finest in any language — are naturally to be found in the *Areopagitica*, "a Speech for the Liberty of Unlicensed Printing." A few words may be copied here, to show the splendid enthusiasm with which he contemplates his vision of an English Commonwealth: —

"Lords and Commons of England! Consider what a nation it is whereof ye are, and whereof ye are the governors, — a nation not slow and dull, but of a quick, ingenious, and piercing spirit; acute to invent, subtle and sinewy to discourse, not beneath the reach of any point the highest that human capacity can soar to. . . . Now once again, by all concurrence of signs, and by the general instinct of holy and devout men, as they daily and solemnly express their thoughts, God is decreeing to begin some new and great period in his Church, even to the reforming of Reformation itself: what does he then but reveal himself to his servants, and as his manner is, first to his Englishmen?"

* Of Reformation in England, Part Second.

"Methinks I see in my mind a noble and puissant nation rousing herself like a strong man after sleep, and shaking her invincible locks. Methinks I see her like an Eagle muing her mighty youth, and kindling her undazzled eyes at the full midday beam, purging and unscaling her long-abused sight at the fountain itself of heavenly radiance; while the whole noise of timorous and flocking birds, with those also that love the twilight, flutter about, amazed at what she means, and in their envious gabble would prognosticate a year of sects and schisms!"

It is not merely the splendid rhetoric which clothes in such figures the facts that looked quite otherwise to a profaner eye; but that these last words, especially, give a glimpse of the party passions and alarms that beset the revolutionary State, and in time brought the magnificent dream to nought. Within two years after this great defence of religious liberty, an angry Presbyterian speaks of toleration as "the grand design of the Devil, — his masterpiece and chief engine he works by at this time, to uphold his tottering kingdom."* In two years more, "Pride's purge" had cleared the Parliament of the Presbyterian party, with its helpless reactions and protests. The victorious In-

* Thomas Edwards, in his "Gangræna" (1646), a long and very dull but curious and instructive tirade against the mischiefs of religious Independency. One cannot quite spare this inside view of the sects and "sub-dichotomies of petty schisms" as Milton calls them, with which England was at this time afflicted. The lewd and hypocritical Roundhead in Scott's "Woodstock" only hints the scandals told of these sectaries, especially the Anabaptists, who appear to have revived the primitive custom of *naked* baptism of adults. The most radical heresies of the nineteenth century appear full-grown, rampant, and aggressive, as soon as the pressure of church authority is taken off.

dependents submitted their petty strifes and divisions to be controlled by the genius of Cromwell; and for ten years more the Commonwealth became a Military Republic, strong, full-armed, and resolute, — a despotic Monarchy in everything but the name, but far enough from the Fifth Monarchy, for which the enthusiasts prayed and of which they dreamed.

The tenacity and courage of Milton's republican faith are best seen in the last of his political tracts, published in 1660, in the very moment of the Restoration, on "the ready and easy way to establish a Free Commonwealth, and the excellence thereof, compared with the inconveniences and dangers of readmitting Kingship in this Nation," — "now that nothing remains," he thinks, "but in all reason the certain hopes of a speedy and immediate settlement forever in a firm and free Commonwealth." He will not doubt "but all ingenuous and knowing men will easily agree that a free Commonwealth — without single Person or House of Lords — is by far the best government, if it can be had," — the form of government, so far as we can make it out, being a Parliament of elective life-members in perpetual session; in short, a Revolutionary Convention like that of France in 1793, without its revolutionary passion. Here are the closing sentences: —

"What I have spoken is the language of that which is not called amiss *The good old Cause.* If it seem strange to any, it will not seem more strange, I hope, than convincing to backsliders. Thus much I should perhaps have said, though I were sure I should have spoken only to trees and stones; and had none to cry to but with the

Prophet, *O Earth, Earth, Earth!* to tell the very soil itself what its perverse inhabitants are deaf to. Nay, though what I have spoke should happen — which Thou suffer not, who didst create man free! nor Thou next, who didst redeem us from being servants of men! — to be the last words of our expiring liberty. But I trust I shall have spoken persuasion to abundance of sensible and ingenuous men; to some, perhaps, whom God may raise to these stones to become children of reviving Liberty, — and may reclaim, though they seem now choosing them a captain back for Egypt, to bethink themselves a little, and consider whither they are rushing; to exhort this torrent also of the people not to be so impetuous, but to keep their due channel; and at length recovering and uniting their better resolutions, now that they see already how open and unbounded the insolence and rage is of our common enemies, to stay these ruinous proceedings, justly and timely fearing to what a precipice of destruction the deluge of this epidemic madness would hurry us, through the general defection of a misguided and abused multitude."

It was a vain protest against the madness — as he deemed it — of the Restoration. It was the more exasperating, as coming from one who had volunteered and gloried in the defence of regicide; and we still find it strange that the dauntless republican reached, in his penury and blindness, a shelter from the reactionary storm that now set in.

The Presbyterians had invited, and still hoped to control, the Restoration. But within two years more the Act of Uniformity destroyed in the English Church the last vestige of the work of the Puritans; and a new Saint Bartholomew (Aug. 24, 1662) saw that great act of stanch and sober courage, the voluntary seces-

sion of two thousand of the clergy.* The era of Puritanism was past; and from this date the freedom of conscience which it sought is to be known under the title — not so heroic, perhaps, but not less honorable — of "Nonconformist."

The loss was not all on the side of the Establishment, which had so cast off many of its bravest and truest children. The conception of the religious life itself which came to prevail in England was distinctly narrowed and lowered by the failure of that sublime dream of an ideal Commonwealth. The forms of religion were left to the State Church; the soul of piety was oftener found in what that Church excluded and disowned. English religious history is unique in having two parallel movements so clearly recognized, so distinct, and with so little tendency to run together, — one of secular indifference, one of a narrow pietism.

How cynically worldly the Establishment had grown in the eighteenth century, is almost the only impression of it left with us to-day.† On the other hand, the great work of Nonconformity has been among the lower Middle Class, to whom religion is a very serious thing, because it is the only outlook from the monotony of a hopelessly narrow and dreary life. To

* The series of Acts by which Puritanism was driven from the English Church was the following: Act of Uniformity (1662); Conventicle Act (1664); Five-Mile Act (1665); Test and Corporation Act (1673: abolished 1718).

† "Gentlemen," said Lord Thurlow to a Dissenting deputation, "I am for the Established Church: not that I care for one damned religion more than another, but because it is the Established Church: and if you can get your damned religion established, I will be for that too."

such as the inspired tinker Bunyan, for example, religion is not merely creed and practice, — it is poetry, vision, hope; it is all that life in those humble ways can know of poetry, vision, hope. For more than a century following the Restoration, Dissenters were practically disfranchised: no share in the glory or power of the public life of England could be theirs.

So came first exclusion from secular and political affairs, then repugnance to them. On the one hand religion was the only thing to them worth thinking of or living for; and so what was passionate and narrow went straight to make that "other-worldliness" which Coleridge reproached as a bane of religious life in England, while a sincere but timid suspicion shrank from the most innocent of pleasures or anything like a sunny breadth of thought.* On the other hand, those natural and easy ways by which men broaden in their interests and sympathies, while the mind grows clear and vigorous in healthy action, — the cares of equal citizenship, and the opportunity of the higher education, — the Nonconformists were debarred from by the iniquity of laws they had no hand in making and no strength to break. The crude and barbarous theology of orthodox Dissent would never have been the religion of those good souls, but that they lived an unreal life, shut in by high walls from the large life of thought and action in the world outside. The life of humble piety they led showed often great courage and sincerity; and the very force that compelled it into its narrow channel made of it

* The writings of the Nonjuror William Law did most to create the peculiar type of piety here spoken of.

something as genuine and beautiful in its kind as anything that Christian history has to show, — something of which we still have the echo in many an eighteenth-century hymn, and in the record of many a religious biography of that time. The two halves of that powerful and fervid national life are cut asunder. That is why the saints and heroes of Dissent never appear in the pages of history, while domineering prelates, with no heart of faith at all, give an evil eminence to the Church of that period.

It has been the fashion of historians and critics to scorn the lack of ideality and heroism in the eighteenth century. But its best qualities do not stand out on the surface. What was heroic in its antecedents had lost the battle. The flag of "the good old cause" was down. The dream of a Christian Commonwealth had been roughly broken. The best life of England had been driven back into obscure byways. The age of Puritanism, which is the heroic age of Christian history, had passed away; and such a City of God as men could still believe in was — what it had been to Saint Augustine at the fall of Rome — not the strength and splendor of an earthly State, but only the faint and far-off vision of one "eternal in the heavens."

V.

PORT ROYAL.

PORT-ROYAL is the old name of a little valley about twenty miles to the west of Paris.* As early as 1204 it was made over to pious uses by a crusading baron, lord of the estate, or by his wife, and was long occupied by a convent of nuns of the order of St. Bernard. The religious house thus founded has linked the name of the little valley with a remarkable movement of thought in the Roman Church, as well as with one of the most interesting chapters of monastic life to be found in all Christian history.†

In the year 1599 there was inducted as novice among the nuns of Port Royal a child eight years old, grave and precocious, second daughter of a cele-

* The original name is said to be *Porrois*, and to signify, as near as may be, a bushy pond, or swamp. The easy transmutation of the word to *Port-Royal* is connected with a courtly but unlikely story of a visit paid to the spot by Philip Augustus, in 1214.

† The admirable study of the whole subject by Sainte-Beuve (5 vols., Hachette, Paris, 1860) is well known, as one of the most perfect of special histories. A more condensed narrative, composed with excellent skill and knowledge of the ground, by Rev. Charles Beard ("Port Royal, a contribution to the History of Religious Literature in France," 2 vols., Longman, London), leaves nothing to be desired by the English reader. An earlier narrative by Mrs. Schimmelpennink gives an interesting description of the recent appearance of the valley.

brated advocate named Arnauld, and grandchild of an equally celebrated advocate, Marion. In the view of both father and grandfather, this was simply a convenient way of providing for one of a family of children, which in course of years increased to twenty. To secure for the child the succession to the convent rule, they did not even scruple, a little later, to state her age as at least six years more than it was; and further, to disguise her name by giving, instead, that which she had taken as a sister in the little community. This pious fraud had its effect, not only on the king's good-nature, but also upon the grave dignitaries of the Church. At the age of eleven, the child Jaqueline Arnauld, famous in religious history as *La Mère Angélique*, became Abbess, invested with full authority over the twelve or fifteen young women who then constituted the religious house. Until her death in 1661, at the age of seventy, the story of Port Royal is almost the personal biography of her who was during all that time its heart and soul.

For the first few years, we may well suppose that it was something like playing at the austerities of convent life. Very quaint and pretty pictures have come down, to illustrate this period. A morning call of that gay and gallant king Henry IV., who knowing that her father was visiting there rode up, curious to see the pious flock under their child-shepherdess; the little maid herself, in full ecclesiastical costume, and mounted on high pattens to disguise her youth, at the head of her procession to meet her royal visitor at the gate; the kiss he threw over the garden-wall next day as he passed by on a hunt, with his compli-

ments to *Madame la petite Abbesse*, — these are bright and innocent episodes in the stormy story of the time.

But a great and sudden change came about a few years later. The young abbess, now nearly eighteen years of age, became converted to the most serious and rigid view of the duties of her calling. Gently and kindly, but without an instant's wavering of purpose, inflexible to all temptation and entreaty, she resolved to restore the primitive austerity of the rule of their pious-founder Saint Bernard. For one thing, this rule demanded that the time of morning prayer should be carried back to two o'clock from the self-indulgent hour of four; and, for another, that all little personal treasures and belongings should be given up for that perfect religious poverty which is the ideal of monastic life. In this, the example of the girl-abbess, cheerful and resolute in choosing the hardest task always for herself, easily won the day. The crisis of the reform was when, with passionate grief, with tears and swooning, she steadily refused admittance to her own father and brother, hardening herself against their entreaties, anger, and reproach, and would only see them at the little grating that separated the life within from the life without.

The true history of Port Royal dates from this crisis, "Wicket-Day," September 25, 1609. Just one hundred years and a few days later, early in October, 1709, the malice of the Jesuit party, which for more than half that time had shown a strangely persistent and malignant hostility, had its way. The grounds were laid waste. The sacred buildings were destroyed.

Even the graves were dug open, and the bodies that had been tenderly laid in them were cast out to be torn by dogs. All was done which insult and wanton desecration could do, to show that the heroic and eventful life of Port Royal was no more.

So far, it is simply the fortunes of a Religious House, perhaps no more famous than many others, and not greatly different from them in the sort of story it has to tell. In this view, it is chiefly notable for being as it were a family history, connected at every point with the character and fortunes of a single household. Not less than twenty of the family of Arnauld — Angélique herself, her brothers and sisters, and children of a brother and sister — belonged to it, whether as simple nun, as official head, as lay-brother, champion, director, or adviser. Of these the most eminent in the lists of theology was "the great Arnauld," youngest child of the twenty, famous in controversy, indefatigably busy as a writer, scholar, logician, and polemic, stanch in persecution and in exile to the very close of his long life of eighty-two years (1612–1694). But there is hardly a day or an event in that story, for more than ninety of the hundred years, in which the most conspicuous name on the record is not that of a son or daughter of the family of Arnauld.

A very characteristic feature in the history is the single-hearted fidelity and unwavering courage of the female members of this religious community, which quite surpasses, at one and another crisis, that of their chosen champions and advisers. At least, these religious heroines would neither understand nor admit certain terms of compromise which theological sub-

tilty found it easy to prove and accept. The point at issue was not so much one of opinion as of conscience and honor; and, to the amazement of friend and enemy, a score of these gentle and timid women went without hesitation into prison or poverty for what in humility of spirit they made not the least pretension to understand; or if they did waver, turned back with agonies of remorse to share the poverty or the prison of the rest. It came at length to be a mere question of fact, — whether five given propositions were contained in certain Latin folios they had never read and could not have understood; but the Pope and the Jesuits had challenged the conscience of the little community, and to give way on one point was to be guilty of all.

This unique fidelity on so fine-drawn a line of conscience has to do in part with the general discipline of Port Royal, and with simple loyalty to a Religious House. But, in particular, it was created by the singular confidence and weight that were given in that discipline to the counsels of the spiritual Director. The Confessional had been developed to a system inconceivably vigilant and minute, touching every step of daily conduct. The skill trained under that system had become a science. It had its recognized adepts, masters, and professors, as well known as those of any other art or mystery. No less than three,* each of whom may be called a man of genius in this vocation, are identified with the history of Port Royal. That passive heroism which is the great glory of these humble confessors is a quality most of all to be had

* Saint-Cyran, Singlin, and De Saci.

and strengthened in the air of the confessional. It goes naturally with the tender piety and the vow of implicit obedience, which make the atmosphere of monastic life. One of the saints of the period, a man of great emotional piety, of fertile and poetic fancy, charitable and tender-hearted to those who might be gained to the faith, and of pitiless rigor to those who would not,* — St. Francis de Sales, — had set that mark deep upon the mind of Angélique Arnauld, and through her it became a quality of the house. Nothing in the religious life, as we see it under such a discipline, is so foreign to our notion as the abject submission of a strong and superior mind to one inferior perhaps in every other quality except the genius and the tact of moral guidance. But nothing is so near the heart of that wonderful power held and exercised by the Roman priesthood.†

A special circumstance brought this religious community more conspicuously to the front in the history

* As shown in the exile forced upon those who were not won by his persuasions, who fled in the night across the Lake from his parish of Annecy, in Switzerland. In 1599 "he got the Duke of Savoy to expel the Protestant ministers from several districts." He is said to have made 72,000 converts to the Roman faith.

† Here is the way it looks to the Catholic eye : "The Catholic religion does not oblige one to discover his sins indifferently to all the world. It suffers him to live concealed from all other men; but it makes exception of one alone, to whom he is commanded to disclose the depths of his heart, and to show himself as he is. It is only this one man in the world whom we are commanded to undeceive; and he must keep it an inviolable secret, so that this knowledge exists in him as if it were not there. Can anything be desired more charitable and gentle? Yet the corruption of man is such, that he finds hardship in this command." — PASCAL : *Thoughts*, ch. iii. ¶ 8.

of the time than its humble locality might promise. As the fame of its discipline spread, its numbers grew. The narrow cells were crowded, and the unwholesome damps bred fever. These pious recluses were content to accept sickness and death for their appointed discipline. But the better sense prevailed, and an estate in the edge of Paris was bought, built on, and occupied. The most critical events in the story, accordingly, have their place, not in the rude valley, but in the tumultuous capital. There are two Port Royals, one "in Paris," one "in the Fields;" and the scene keeps shifting from one location to the other.

Then, too, it was Paris of the Regency and of the Fronde, where some of the most critical years were passed. This brought the Religious House upon the scene of sharp conflicts in Church and State, and so exposed it to dangers which in time grew threatening. Some of the famous women of the day, who had been pets of society, or had been deep in political intrigue, found shelter and comfort among the nuns of Port Royal, — notably the famous and too charming Madame de Longueville, sister of the great Condé, — drawn, perhaps, by ties of old friendship, or reminiscence of early pious longings, or that recoil of feeling deepening to remorse when a course of vanity and ambition has been run through. Such guests might easily bring upon the most devout of monastic retreats a perilous suspicion of disloyalty to the Court.

These are the points of interest we find in the annals of Port Royal simply as a monastic institution, as a group of persons bound by general sympa-

thy in religious views. These alone make it a unique subject of religious biography. But these alone are not what make its real importance in Christian history. The hundred years covered by the life of this community are the chronological frame which incloses a very remarkable phase in the development of modern Romanism. The controversy on the doctrine of Grace, brought so sharply to the front in the conflicts of the Reformation; the long and bitter warfare of Jesuit and Jansenist; vivacious and eager debate on the ground and form taken in the intricate science of Casuistry; acrimonious discussion as to the exact meaning and import of Papal Infallibility, — these, no less than the heroic and indomitable temper exhibited by a group of pious recluses in defence of what was to them a point of conscience as well as a point of faith, are what give the story its significance to us.

Port Royal was the centre and soul of what is known as the Jansenist controversy. Jansenism was the last great revolt or protest against official domination, within the lines of the Roman Church; and it was effectually suppressed. The story of its suppression is the most striking illustration we find anywhere of that unyielding hardihood in the assertion of authority, which that Church has deliberately adopted for its policy; of that unrelenting centralism, which does not stick at any inhumanity or any sacrifice, to secure the servile perfection of ecclesiastical discipline. The best intelligence and the truest conscience of the time were clearly on the side of the Jansenist protest; but such reasons weighed not one

grain against the hard determination of Pope, Jesuit and King to crush, in the most devout and loyal subjects of the Church, the meekest and humblest assertion of mental liberty.

For the origin of this controversy we must go back a little way, to the earlier polemics of the Reformation. The doctrine of Divine Decrees had come, as we have seen, to be not only a main point in the creed of Calvin, but a test of fidelity in the Protestant faith. Its strong point, morally, was in setting a direct and explicit command of God to the conscience over against the arbitrary and minute directions of the Church, which were sure to run out into a quibbling casuistry. Its weak point was that it declared, or seemed to declare, a downright religious Fatalism. The Church, on the other hand, in demanding obedience to its rule, must allow something for the liberty of the subject to obey or disobey; while the doctrine of moral freedom known as Pelagian, or even the semi-Pelagian compromise of it, had always been stigmatized as heresy. Here was a fair and open field for never-ending controversy.

A topic so inviting to scholastic subtilty and polemic ardor could not be neglected by the Jesuits. They became eager champions of free-will. Their skill in the confessional had made them masters of the art of casuistry. The whole drift of their method was to make religion a matter of sentiment and blind obedience, rather than of conscience and interior conviction. The Pelagian heresy they must at the same time repudiate, in terms at least; and it was a party triumph when the Spaniard Molina, an eminent

doctor of their Order, published, in 1588, a treatise to reconcile the sovereignty and foreknowledge of God with the moral liberty of man. The key-word of his argument we shall express accurately enough by the phrase *contingent decrees.* Our acts themselves are not in fact predetermined, though the Divine foreknowledge of them is infallible. This fine point was seized as a real key to the position. The name "Molinist" is used to define a system of thinking which holds that "the grace of God which giveth salvation" is not *sufficient* of itself, but requires, to make it *efficient,* the co-operation of the human will. And this may be understood to be the position of the Jesuits in the debate that followed.

But an uneasy sense was left, in many pious minds, that this was not the genuine doctrine of the Church. In particular, two young students of theology at Louvain were drawn, about the year 1604, into deep discussion of the point at issue. These were Saint-Cyran, afterwards confessor of Port Royal, and Cornelius Jansen, a native of Holland. They were well agreed that the point must be met by the study of Saint Augustine; and the one task of their lives — particularly of Jansen, till his death in 1638 — was little else than the exploring and the expounding of this single authority. Jansen is said to have studied all the writings of Augustine through ten times, and all those pertaining to the Pelagian controversy thirty times.

The strict Augustinian doctrine of the Divine Decrees thus became the firm conviction of these two friends, and through them the profession of Port Royal. It differs barely by a hair's-breadth — if indeed any

difference can be found — from the Calvinistic dogma. Jansenism is accordingly often called Calvinism, or Protestantism, within the Church of Rome. Professing to be the most loyal and sincere of Catholics, the Port-Royalists of course denied the charge. The distinction they made was this: * The Fatalistic doctrine, or Calvinism, asserts that there is no such thing as moral liberty at all. The Pelagian doctrine, or Molinism, holds that man's natural freedom suffices to take the first essential step to his own salvation. The true Augustinian doctrine is that man's freedom is (so to speak) dormant and impotent, till it has been evoked by Divine "prevenient" grace; then, and not till then, it is competent to act. In short, in the most literal sense, "it is God that worketh in us both to will and to do." †

This thin line of opinion, stretched along the sharp boundary between two gulfs of error, made (as it were) the conducting wire which attracted the sharp lightning of Jesuit intolerance, so as to strike, and at length to shatter, the institution of Port Royal.

The controversy broke out upon the publication, in 1640, of the heavy folios in which Jansen had summed up the labor of his life; and these folios were searched with jealous eyes, till five propositions were found in them, or were said to be found in them, on which a charge of heresy could be laid. Only two are im-

* See "The Provincial Letters," Letter xviii.

† One of the anecdotes of the time when Port Royal was under the darkest cloud is that a Jesuit prelate, happening to come into church when this text was being read, at once silenced the utterance of the flagrant Jansenist heresy!

portant enough, or clear enough of technicality, to occupy us here. They are these: (1) That there are duties required of man which he is naturally unable to perform; (2) That Christ died, not for all mankind, but only for the elect.

In the course of the debate these "Five Propositions" became very famous. Whether they did or did not exist in Jansen's folios was the point on which, as we have seen, the faithful women of Port Royal staked their loyalty and underwent their martyrdom. The Pope's bull, condemning the volumes, asserted that the heresies were there. As good Catholics, the Port-Royalists condemned the propositions; but as loyal members of the community they declared that they were not there. The Pope, they said, was doubtless infallible on a point of faith, but not on a point of fact.* To this it was replied, that religious faith was demanded for the one, only ecclesiastical or human faith for the other.

On such poor quibbles as these all that long story of persecution turns. It was, to be sure, the proverbial rancor of theological hate that made the attack so bitter. But what made it effectual and deadly was that a Jesuit confessor held the conscience (such as it was) of the young king; and that a vague dread of disloyalty, with memories of the time when he and his mother were barred out of Paris by the Fronde, made the point a test not only of religious but of political soundness in the faith.

It would be a weary and needless task to trace the changes of fortune that befell the little community

* The distinction, famous in those days, of *fait* and *droit*.

during those fifty evil years. Our concern is only with the movement of thought in which those fortunes were involved. A group of very cultivated, able, and devoted men had gathered in close relations with the Religious House. They included brothers, nephews, friends of the women who had assumed its vows, as well as their clerical advisers. They had founded a famous School at Port Royal in the Fields, and made the estate beautiful and productive by the labor of their hands. We find among them, as pupils or associates, several of the eminent men of letters, — including Racine, Boileau, and La Fontaine, — who reflected back upon the religious community something of the lustre of that famous and brilliant age.

Bright on the list is the illustrious name of Blaise Pascal, certainly the most vigorous and original genius of the day. At twelve, he was feeling his own way, in his play-hours, in the forbidden field of mathematics, — forbidden because his father wished first to make him master his Latin and Greek; and when detected he was trying to prove to himself what he seems to have divined already, that the three angles of a triangle make just two right angles. At eighteen, to save his father labor in accounts, he devised and with infinite pains — making with his own hands something like fifty models — constructed a calculating machine, which was held a miracle of ingenuity, as if he had put mind into brass wheels and steel rods, and actually taught machinery to think.* At twenty-four he

* This notion (if it were really held) was a logical enough result from the Cartesian dogma which then prevailed, that animals were mere machines. "There was hardly a solitary [at Port Royal] who

was in advance of all the natural philosophers of the day, including Descartes, then in the height of his fame, in devising the true test of Torricelli's theory of the weight of the atmosphere, in the famous experiment of the *Puy de Dôme*, a high hill in his native Auvergne: the mercury, which stood at something over twenty-six (French) inches at the foot of the hill, showed less than twenty-four inches at its summit. Later in life, he relieved the distresses of an agonizing disease by working out the true theory of the Cycloid, and challenging the mathematicians of the day to a solution of its problems.

These feats of a singularly sagacious and penetrating intellect interest us as showing the high-water mark of the science of the day; but still more, in this particular connection, as a contrast or relief to the share which Pascal had in the religious life of Port Royal, and to the unique place he holds as a religious thinker.

He was by nature seriously inclined. His health broke down early under the strain of study and discipline, and for more than half his life he was a nervous dyspeptic and a paralytic. "From his eigh-

did not talk of *automata*. To beat a dog was no longer a matter of any consequence. The stick was laid on with the utmost indifference, and those who pitied the animals, as if they had any feeling, were laughed at. They said they were only clockwork, and the cries they uttered when they were beaten were no more than the noise of some little spring that had been moved: all this involved no sensation. They nailed the poor creatures to boards by the four paws to dissect them while still alive, in order to watch the circulation of the blood, which was a great subject of discussion." — Fontaine's *Mémoires* (Cologne, 1738), ii. 52. These delightful Memoirs, more than anything else, bring us near to the heart of Port Royal.

teenth year to the hour of his death, he never passed a day without pain." He had partly recovered under a change of habit, and seems to have enjoyed the gay life of Paris, even with a touch of extravagance; for he chanced one day to be driving a carriage with six horses, when the leaders plunged over an unrailed bridge into the river Seine, and only the breaking of reins and traces saved him from being drowned. He appears never to have recovered from the shock of this accident; and the tradition afterwards current was that he always saw a chasm close at his left hand, and could not sit easy in his seat, unless a chair or a screen were set beside him.

The impression went deep and strong, naturally enough, in the way of a profound piety and contrition. A younger sister was already one of the religious community of Port Royal. He himself, at twenty-four, in a time of religious revival, had come under the powerful influence of the confessor Saint-Cyran. At thirty-one, in the autumn of 1654, after experiencing all the intensity of that spiritual crisis which is termed "conversion," he devoted his life, with absolute fervor of conviction, to the tasks and disciplines of piety. This rare mind, prematurely great and prematurely lost, — for Pascal died at the age of thirty-nine, worn out with cruel austerities * and long disease, — is the

* As if all the rest were not enough, his sister Jacqueline relates that he wore an iron girdle next his skin, armed with sharp points, which he would drive into his flesh with his elbow, if he ever detected in himself any thought of vanity. In short, he as eagerly courted pain for its own sake as the Eastern saints and anchorites had done in their fanatical austerities. See "Early Christianity," pp. 173–178.

radiant centre in that circle of genius, of profound and devout thought, which makes the intellectual glory of Port Royal.

The story of this religious crisis would not be quite complete, without some mention of the "miracle of the Holy Thorn," which took place in the spring of 1656. A fragment of the Crown of Thorns had come into the possession of a pious enthusiast, who could not rest content without passing it about through several Religious Houses, to receive their veneration as an inestimable relic. A little niece of Pascal, pupil at Port Royal, was suffering with a painful swelling of the eyelid, which seemed incurable; but when touched by the holy thorn it presently discharged, and "the child was healed in the self-same hour." Pascal made no doubt that the miracle was real. The mocking sarcasms of the enemies of the House only rendered the belief in it more fixed and dear. It was the beginning of what grew into a long series of extravagances and scandals, which disfigure the later history of Jansenism down to its dregs in the days of the *Convulsionnaires*. But now the faith was natural, genuine, and sincere; and it marks the starting-point of that remarkable volume of Fragments which we know as "Pascal's Thoughts." *

A full descriptive title of Pascal's Thoughts would

* In the earlier editions of the "Thoughts," very much was altered, suppressed, transposed, or added from other sources. A convenient summary of the literary history may be found in the *variorum* edition of Louandre (Charpentier, Paris, 1854). A comparison of texts is absolutely necessary, to see how the precision and vivacity of Pascal's style have often been smoothed into vague commonplace by the early editors.

be "Hints and Fragments of an Essay in Defence of the Christian Religion." Some of the "hints" are expanded into chapters, or brief essays; and some of the "fragments" consist of broken phrases, or even single words, written almost illegibly as loose memoranda, and faithfully preserved as they were left by the writer at his death. When the "Thoughts" were first published, some of the keener points were trimmed away, so as not to disturb the "religious peace" by thorning the Jesuit sensibilities; many of the fragments were omitted, and the whole was made over into an artificial order. Even this smooth manipulation, however, did not disguise the vivacity, the emphasis, the shrewdness and point of these famous paragraphs, which have kept, in the line of theology, a repute something like that in social life of the contemporary "Maxims" of La Rochefoucauld. With equal vigor, they often have almost equal acridity and sharpness.

This quality comes from what might almost be called the key-note of the Essay, — an incessant brooding on the paradoxes of human nature. Whole pages may be described as an expansion of those vigorous lines in Young's "Night Thoughts": —

> "How poor, how rich — how abject, how august —
> How complicate, how wonderful is Man!"

Pascal puts this paradox in the figure of a self-conscious and sentient Reed, — a figure which, by much revision, he has brought at length into this shape:

"Man is but a reed, the frailest thing in nature, — but a reed *that thinks*. To crush him, does not need the

weapons of all the universe: a breath, a drop of water, is enough. But though the universe should crush him, yet man would still be nobler than his destroyer; for he knows that he is mortal, while the universe knows nothing of its own dominion over him" (chap. ii. ¶ 10).

Another aspect of the paradox is given, pungently enough, in this very subtile justification of the conditions of civil government: —

"*Summum jus, summa injuria.* The rule (*voie*) of the majority is best, because we can see what it is, and because it has the power to make itself obeyed; still it is the rule of the incompetent. If it had been possible, force would have been put into the hands of Justice. But force is a material quality, and will not let itself be handled according to our will; while justice is a mental quality, directed by our choice. Hence, justice has been committed to the hands of Force; and what we must obey, that we call right. Herein is found the right of the sword: which is, indeed, a genuine right, since without it violence would be on one side, and justice on the other" (chap. vii. ¶ 8).

One other example of this epigrammatic turn:

"One who would clearly perceive the nothingness of man, has only to consider the causes and effects of Love. The cause is a trifle (*je-ne-sais-quoi*); the effects are frightful. That trifle, so slight a thing that you cannot trace it, stirs up all the earth, — princes, armies, the world itself. If Cleopatra's nose had been a little shorter, the whole face of the earth would have been different" (chap. viii. ¶ 29).

That there is something cynic and saturnine in this contemptuous wit there is no denying. But there is

nothing in the character of the Essay, taken broadly, to show Pascal as a sceptic in matters of faith, as is sometimes said, or to hint that his austerities were a sort of penance, to exorcise the spirit of unbelief. Not only a considerable part of the "Thoughts" are a defence of Christianity on the familiar ground of the modern Apologists, — the argument from history, prophecy, and miracle, — but in all this portion the tone has absolutely the calm and contented assurance of a pious believer. The very simplicity with which the argument is put, free from all suspicion of the flaws a later time has found in it, is token of a faith that — in this direction at least — has not yet learned to question.

We should probably state the case more fairly thus. The mind of Pascal had been brought to feel with singular keenness the contrast (which, as we have seen, never occurred to the Mediæval mind) between the two forms of assurance which we call Knowledge and Faith; one resting on outward evidence, the other on interior conviction. In Geometry he followed precisely, even as a child, the line of pure mathematical demonstration. In Physics he demanded and devised the most accurate processes of experiment, to prove the theory which he already held as a truth of reason. It is a waymark of the advance we have made in the development of religious thought, that just here, in the keenest and most reflective intellect of the time, the contrast of the two methods, scientific and intuitive, had come sharply and clearly into consciousness. Pascal was in the very front rank of the scientific advance of his age, — an age of widen-

ing discovery and exact observation. But there is no reason to think that religious belief was not just as real and true to him as any demonstrations of natural science. The whole method of the life he had adopted, the experiments in living which he saw constantly close about him, made that life as real, and the foundation it rested on as sure, as anything that could possibly be proved in the way of geometry or physics. In truth, was not that realm of faith, for which those humble devotees were so loyal to live and die, at least *as real a thing* as that celestial realm which Galileo saw afar off, "through a glass darkly"?

In fact, Pascal seems to have held natural science very cheap. It was far, in that age, from having reached the point where it begins to furnish a serviceable rule of conduct. Its widening fields of discovery served for little more than mental expansion and delight. To such a mind as his the system of Copernicus and Galileo was simply a wider void, over against the intense reality he was conscious of in the world of emotion, belief, and hope. "Nature," he said, "confounds the sceptic, and reason confounds the dogmatist." But neither nature nor reason could annihilate that realm of interior reality in which he lived. Nay, the very confusion of doubt and dogma only made this reality more apparent.

Accordingly, we find that it was not the contrast of the outward and inward world — so clear to us as we look back upon the mental conditions of his day — which really impressed his mind. It was rather the moral contrast between two methods, both purely intellectual. This contrast he discusses, with genu-

ine interest, under the names of Epictetus and Montaigne. The Stoic method he admires, but condemns because it leads to pride. The Sceptic or Epicurean method he hates, because it leads to contempt. "Epictetus is very harmful to those who are not deeply persuaded of the corruption of all human virtue which is not of faith; Montaigne is deadly to those who have any leaning to impiety and vice." How far Science is from giving him any light, he shows in the following words: —

"I had spent much time in the study of abstract sciences, and was weary of the solitude which I found in it. When I began the study of man, I saw that those abstract sciences do not meet his case; that I was more astray in exploring them than others were in ignorance of them; and so I pardoned their imperfect knowledge. But I thought at least to find many associates in the study of man, and that this is the proper study for human creatures. I was deceived. There are still fewer who study man than geometry. It is because we do not know how to study ourselves, that we search out other things. But, after all, even this is not the knowledge which man needs; and, for his own welfare, he had best remain in ignorance of it" (chap. viii. ¶ 11).

All this shows, to be sure, a fundamental scepticism as to the grounds of intellectual belief, so far as they can be determined by the study of nature, even of human nature. Such study, it asserts, can but mock the soul with stones instead of bread. But it does not indicate that Pascal ever wavered in the least as to the grounds of religious verity.

The fame of Pascal as a writer rests not so much

on the "Thoughts," which are broken and incomplete, but on the "Provincial Letters," which, for both style and argument, are reckoned among the most perfect of literary compositions. They are claimed in fact to have created, as it were, by one master stroke, that clear, graceful, piquant, and brilliant prose style which is the particular boast of the charming language in which he wrote.

These Letters give us, so to speak, the interior history of the conflict of Port Royal against the Jesuits. That is, without telling any of the incidents, they give the line of debate on morals and dogma which shows the course and spirit of that controversy. To the charges of the Jesuits a labored reply had been made by Arnauld, which fell quite flat and dead when he read it by way of trial to his colleagues. Pascal saw the point, and was persuaded to try his hand. And so came, at due intervals, this series of inimitable "Letters addressed to a Provincial," — probably the most perfect example of grave, sustained, and pungent irony in all literature.

Specimens would not serve to show their quality, as in the case of the "Thoughts." The impression, like the expression of a face, must be caught, if not by studying, at least by glancing at, the whole. A large part is taken up with those details of casuistry which have given an evil odor to the very name of what is really nothing but a study of "cases in morals," — as if it meant apologies for what is immoral, — and have added the word "jesuitry" to the world's vocabulary of contempt. And these are given in the blandest of dialogue between the modest in-

quirer on the one part, who represents the author, and the Jesuit Father on the other part, who brings out, with a droll complacency, all the ingenious apologies for usury, perjury, theft, and murder, to be found in those famous casuists, Molina, Sanchez, and Escobar. Another large part is taken up with those fine-drawn distinctions of philosophic dogma which define the true faith between the Calvinist peril on the right hand and the Molinist on the left. These have been sufficiently indicated in the story of the Jesuit assault and the Jansenist controversy.

Now that the glow of controversy has gone out of these Letters, they in their turn have grown tame and dull. It is as impossible to recall the helpless and smarting wrath that chafed under the keen whiplash of moral satire, as it is to revive the polemic interest of the debate on "sufficient" and "efficient" grace, or the true meaning of the phrase "proximate power," or on the question — which Richelieu himself had in an evil hour turned aside to argue — whether "attrition" without "contrition" entitles the penitent to absolution. The interior conflicts of the Roman Catholic theology two hundred years ago have small interest for us now.

But there is another aspect of the case, which has a very vital meaning to our history, take a view of it as surface-broad as we will. The century which embraces the heroic and tragic story of Port Royal is also the century of splendor to the French Monarchy; of chief pride and strength to the Gallican Church, which sunned itself in the rays of that glittering orb. When our story begins, Henry IV. is concerting an

armed league of European powers, by which he means to break the strength of Spain and compel a religious peace. The next year (1610) he is stabbed to death by a Jesuit assassin, and the way is open that leads into the horror of the Thirty Years' War beyond the border, and on the hither side to the long tragedy of the extermination of Protestantism and the crushing of all free thought in France.

It is the age of the great Court Preachers. Bossuet and Bourdaloue died five years before, and Fénelon six years after, the final desolation of Port Royal. The Revocation of the Edict of Nantes (1685) — which exiled half a million of Protestants,* hunted out by the terrors of search-warrant and dragonnade; which carried misery and dread unspeakable among a whole population, pious, thriving, and pathetically loyal — took place during the height of the Jesuit persecution of Port Royal, while "the great Arnauld" was in hiding or in exile. To make the tragedy more sombre, these horrors were approved, if not incited, not only by those great prelates, but by the bold controversialist Arnauld himself, who was the victim of their hostility.

Still to enhance the irony of the situation, the same alliance of Court and Jesuit, which persecuted the women of Port Royal for not consenting to the Pope's infallibility in matters of fact as well as in matters of faith, had nearly, by a new revolt against the Pope's authority, made the Church of France independent of the Church of Rome. It was heresy not to sign the "Formulary," in which Jansen's five

* The number is variously stated at from 300,000 to 800,000.

propositions were condemned by Alexander VII.; it was disloyalty not to uphold the King in the Four Articles * of the "Declaration," which had been condemned and annulled by Alexander VIII. Nothing is wanting to proclaim the absolute divorce of ecclesiasticism at that day from humanity and from faith.

To make the evidence of that divorce complete needed only the tragic and pitiful story of the latter days of Port Royal. It is but from a long distance, and very imperfectly at that, that we can know how the cruelty struck into those patient hearts. It was ingeniously aimed just where their tenderest sensibility would feel it most. To be debarred for years from that "Frequent Communion" which was both the joy and the most sacred duty of their lives; to have the Sacraments withheld through suffering months of sickness, because they would not sign with the hand what was a lie to the heart; to come to the hour of death, and still submit to the cold refusal of the words which to them were pass-words and the comforting assurance of eternal blessedness, — all this was reality to them, in a sense we can hardly understand. It is quaintly touching to hear, too, how they flocked "as doves to their windows" near the convent wall, in midwinter nights, to listen to the voice of their Confessor as he preached to them, perched in a tree outside, — and that by stealth, and as it were in flight, for fear of the implacable pursuer. Scenes of this sort show us, indeed, that the faith of that day was not dead. But they seem to show that, when we

* Constituting the so-called "Gallican Liberties." See below, under the title "Infidelity in France."

would find it, we must look for it quite outside that circle illuminated by the burning and shining lights of the official faith.

This inference would not be quite true. We know that Bossuet was an able and, in his way, an estimable champion of the Church he believed in. We can read for ourselves the words of Bourdaloue, which come home genuine and straight to our own conscience. We know that Fénelon was an angel of charity in the diocese to which he had been exiled from the Court. But we know, too, that the Church which these men served had lost "that most excellent gift of charity;" and, even while they served, it was treasuring wrath against the coming day of wrath, which overtook it in the Revolution.

VI.

PASSAGE FROM DOGMA TO PURE REASON.

A FADING interest in theological speculation, which the fourteenth century had cast into the chill of a certain intellectual despair, was suddenly roused to a fervent heat in the flame of the great Reformation. There followed a period of polemics,— active, virulent, and voluminous. Nothing would content the mind now but absolute certainty upon the most unsearchable of problems. Predestination, election, grace, the terms of escape from the sharpest of torments in this life, or torments infinite in the life to come, — matters remote from all possibility of human knowledge, — made the most familiar and the most practical questions of debate, and continued so for something more than a century.

A single glance upon this hundred years of controversy is all that we can spare. On the Catholic side, speculative differences are hushed, for the present, in the stress of the battle that has to be fought against the Reformers ; and, under the authority of the great Council, we find at least a nominal harmony and consent. On the other side, no sooner is the Catholic unity once broken, than opinion runs out into the hundred or more "variations" which the student must take note of, and which the loyal Catholic finds the easiest object of his attack. Speaking broadly, we

may say that the Roman Church had the larger philosophy of life, while the Protestant had the deeper and intenser conviction of the higher law of life. Now it was this conviction which made both the motive and the strength of Protestant dogmatism ; and so we have to follow out the movement of thought we are attempting to trace, chiefly in the debates on the Protestant side.

Again, all parties are agreed, at starting, in taking the Scriptures as final authority on all matters of speculative belief. This is just as true of the Council of Trent, which assumes as the standard of Catholic verity the Vulgate Bible under official interpretation, as it is of Luther's demand to be tried by "the word of holy Scripture," or the arguments of Socinus against the pure humanism of Francis David in Eastern Hungary, or Chillingworth's assertion that "the Bible, and the Bible only, is the religion of Protestants." The point of difference is not that Protestantism has a different standard of ultimate appeal. But Protestantism allows in theory the right of private judgment, without the steadying pressure of a recognized tribunal by which that judgment shall be guided. It was no doubt illogical for Protestants to persecute dissenters, like their opponents : the death of Servetus was a shock to their principle as well as to their humanity ; and, in fact, except where political dangers made the motive or pretext (as under Elizabeth), religious persecution was extremely rare on the Protestant side, contrasting at infinite distance with the systematic policy of torture and suppression which the Catholic theory demanded. Still, neither side was clear of the erroneous assump-

tion that the soul's destiny is staked on rightness of opinion; or could be, until the passage from dogma to philosophy had been fairly made, and opinion was left to be shaped by the free intelligence of mankind.

The change implied in these words is far more radical and fundamental than most theologians have been willing to admit. Indeed, it is only of late years that one comes to see how radical and fundamental it is. The difference as to the standard of authority, or the terms of salvation, is as nothing beside the fundamental postulate in which both parties were agreed. No controversy had risen, as yet, of natural and supernatural. No doubt was felt as to the objective existence of that celestial realm, with its shining courts, and its legions of ministering spirits about the throne, which to the modern mind is the region of pure poetry or religious metaphor; no doubt as to the real agency of angels and devils in the daily business of men's lives; no doubt as to the fiery horrors of the world below, which must prove the doom of the great majority of the human race. All these, to the Christian mind, had their distinct local habitation. The new cosmology of Copernicus, indeed, threatened to invade that realm; but this heresy in science Melanchthon thought should be suppressed forcibly by the State, like any other heresy.

So too the conception held of revelation. It followed that religious doctrine — the "inspired Word" — was thought to be definitely a communication from that outside world to this, — as definitely as the orders sent by special messenger, or the bulletin forwarded by telegraph, from a commanding officer to the forces

under his command. Absolutely, the only business of those who receive them is to understand them in their exact import, and obey them on the peril of their lives. Any hint that they come within the range of free opinion, or make part of the common body of human thought, to be interpreted by the common maxims of criticism, is "heresy" — that is, "free-thinking" — necessarily and at once.

Thus it is the characteristic of this stage of religious opinion that there can be strictly no modification and no compromise. Opinion is a test of loyalty. Only one mode, one shade of opinion, can insure acceptance. And, in the heroic temper so engendered, there is no hair's-breadth of variation for which men would not be, and have not been, as free, nay, eager, to go to martyrdom or exile as any soldier whose valor is appealed to, to man the forlorn hope in battle or siege.

This, I say, follows from the conception of a revelation as accepted in the mind of that time. It is needless to disguise the gravity of the change that has come about. I will not say simply among those whose method of religious thinking is frankly naturalistic, who knowingly accept and consistently abide by the maxims and canons of natural science. The state of mind we call "liberalism" is possibly even more common now among those of professed orthodox opinion (as in the latitudinarianism of the German universities, or among the more intelligent Romanists themselves) than it is with the most advanced of modern thinkers, who are apt to be most positive and dogmatic. The realm of the Unseen may be fully accepted as an article of faith; but it is all left by common under-

standing for the religious imagination to illustrate or define. Belief in revelation may be as fervently proclaimed as ever; but the contents of revelation are left to be shaped and interpreted by the current philosophy of the day. Truth may be held as sacred, and the violation of it as unpardonable, as before; but no sane man of our day would risk his reputation of sanity by hinting at the eternal consequences, much less the eternal doom, of honest error.

This complete difference of mental atmosphere between the Reformation period and ours is the result of three centuries of controversy, analysis, and criticism, which have fairly brought the contents of religious thought within the recognized field of philosophy. For the present, we need have nothing to do with the sudden widening of that field in our day by the study of comparative religions. Our business is strictly within the Christian field, and within the boundaries of modern Europe.

In less than a century and a half from the first movement of reform, the most essential step in the passage from dogma to pure reason had been taken. Descartes (1596–1650), not Luther nor Calvin, is now the name of the recognized leader of thought. That sharp and penetrating solvent of philosophic speculation has at length brought all the old problems into a new form, to be studied under new conditions, and settled (if ever) on a basis radically different from that defined of old.

Of philosophy, in its broader sense, as thus taking the place of dogma in the common thought of men, there are two sides. One is a side of pure specula-

tion ; the other is a side of pure observation or practice. Philosophy, then, in the sense we have to consider, has two departments, — metaphysics on one side, psychology and ethics on the other ; and we have first to see how the germs of these two may be traced in the doctrinal system of that day.

In general terms, it may be said that speculative dogma — involving the Divine nature and attributes and the conditions of the eternal life — is represented to the modern mind in the problems of Metaphysics ; while the human side of dogma, involving the nature of sin and the method of redemption, is represented by the purely practical department of Ethics and the scientific expositions of Psychology.

Now the form in which we find the Protestant dogma at the very start brings us at once upon the ground, and in view of the problems and methods, of these two departments of philosophy. The watchword of Luther, "Justification by Faith," hints that everything at issue in the destiny of the soul — that is, practically speaking, the entire significance of Christianity — is staked *on the believer's state of mind.* Introspection, self-questioning, the interpreting of experience, — in short, all the processes of religious and moral psychology, — necessarily take the place of that definite and intelligible system of rules, by which the Church has explained and directed the religious life.*

* Historically, the course of thought in which this is exhibited is known as the Osiandrian controversy, which starts with the question, *Is grace irresistible?* It proceeds by declaring faith to be "the medium of the indwelling Christ" (suggesting the pure mysticism

And, in this process, it speedily proves absolutely hopeless that any two serious thinkers should think just alike. In short, aside from one or two broad propositions held in common, anything like dogmatism in the field of practical religion becomes futile and impossible. This consequence, naturally enough, was not accepted, or even discerned, by those whose own course is a very clear proof of it to us. They held for a century or two, and perhaps some of them still hold, that justification by faith can, in the long run, mean something else than sincerity and freedom of religious thought. But, to the intelligence of the present day, that result is absolutely plain.

Again, the speculative dogma of the Reformation presently took, in the system of Calvin, the still more rigid form of Predestination. Its formula was the Eternal Divine Decree. In short, speculatively, it is a system of pure religious Fatalism. This is the central dogma, about which are grouped all those conceptions which go to make up the system of Calvinism.* The first sharp speculative controversy among Protes-

of Eckhart), and asserts that "Christ is our righteousness only in his human nature," having, for his work of redemption, discharged himself of his divine attributes (hence the term *Kenotist*). Osiander, an interpreter of Luther's doctrine in a somewhat more subjective and less dogmatic sense, died in 1552.

Again, Luther's doctrine of consubstantiation opened up a controversy on the dogma of "the ubiquity of Christ's body," as asserted by Flach (Flacius), which was soon found to involve unwelcome consequences. The points of difference were compromised in the formula of Torgau (1576), by the virtual condemnation of Melanchthon. Flach (1575) also held the highly mediæval opinion that sin is "something substantial in man" (Paul's ἁμαρτία).

* See page 52, above.

tants (that of the Arminian Remonstrants at the Synod of Dort in 1618) turns on the nature of Divine decrees and the possibility of moral freedom ; * and a large part of the discussions and decisions of the Council of Trent show that the Catholic mind was equally exercised with the Protestant upon this unsolvable question of the metaphysical relation of human life with Infinite Sovereignty. Still further, side by side with the Arminian controversy, almost exactly coincident with it in time, we find the moral problems started by the Molinists on the Catholic side, with their lax interpretation of Christian ethics, leading to the revived Augustinism of the Jansenists, who are properly enough called Calvinists within the Church.

Now a controversy of this nature may begin with texts and their interpretation ; but it must very soon get upon metaphysical ground, and involve differences not so much of dogmatic opinion as of philosophical method. Remember, however, that it is by the nature of the case *religious* philosophy. We are still a century or two from a philosophy which may be properly termed scientific. There is this difference between a religious Fatalism like that of Calvin, and the scientific Determinism of our day, that the former

* In the earlier stages of the controversy, the rigid Determinism of Flach is opposed to the "Synergism" of Melanchthon, which asserts the co-operation of the divine with the human will. This is followed, somewhat later (1589), by the protest of certain theologians of Delft against the strict supralapsarian dogma of Beza (declaring that sin and all its consequences were ordained *before the Fall*). The controversy, being submitted to Arminius, of Leyden, soon developed the antagonism which bore deadly fruit at Dort. — See, as to this whole period, Gieseler, vol. iv. pp. 435–512.

implies a living relation between Divine Will on one side and a sinful humanity on the other. Such a relation can never be purely fatalistic and unmoral, like that to which mere scientific speculation so steadily drifts. Logically or not, it demands Obedience, not blank Submission merely, of the human subject.

And, argue how we may, Obedience means to the human mind something of choice and will. It implies, if it does not assert, — nay, if in terms it denies, — moral liberty. This appeal to the inextinguishable sense of moral freedom may be illogical in theory, or the will may be enthralled in practice; but it is necessary to the system, so long as it remains and calls itself a religious system. Except religion is primarily a law of life, its dogma becomes pure fatalism, and its sentiment lapses straight to Quietism, — that ignoblest of heresies, which was, in fact, the degeneracy of the later Romanism,* just as it is the peril of a boneless antinomian sentimental Calvinism now.

From the hot religious controversies of the sixteenth century we thus find ourselves emerging, in the seventeenth, into a field of debate on the broad open ground of modern metaphysics. It is very interesting, in this view, to find that the tragical and ferocious struggle of the Thirty Years' War — which committed to the wager of battle that issue between Catholic and Protestant Germany which it was vainly hoped to define by the Augsburg Peace in 1555 — had its part in training the keen faculty, and afford-

* See an interesting little volume, "Molinos the Quietist," by John Bigelow. Scribner: New York.

ing the special opportunity, to which we owe what historians commonly regard as the new birth of philosophy.

"When [says Descartes] I had spent some years in studying thus in the book of the world, trying to gather some experience, I took the resolution one day to study also in myself, and to bestow all the strength of my mind in fixing the course I had to follow; and in this I succeeded far better, as I think, than if I had never withdrawn from my country and my books.

"I was then in Germany, summoned thither by occasion of the war which was not yet over; and, as I was returning to the army after the coronation of the Emperor, winter set in, and confined me to a spot where I found no entertaining company; and as, fortunately, there were neither cares nor passions to trouble me, I stayed all day long shut up in a close room (*poêle*), where I had full leisure to talk with my own thoughts. And one of the first I set myself to consider was this." *

We need not follow the easy-going and chatty illustration in which he tells us how he came to reflect that what he wants first of all is unity of method in his opinions. With the slender scientific outfit of that day, "geometry, algebra, and logic," only one method is open to him, which is the deductive, as opposed to generalizing from observed facts. The question of real moment is, How shall he find the premises from which he can reason in perfect confidence?

We must bear in mind, also, that he does not re-

* *Discourse de la Méthode.* Part I. chap. 2.

gard himself as "one of the elect few, whom Divine grace has endowed with the faculty" of dealing with the higher ranges of speculation. His aim is modest and practical, the safe conduct of his own life. Our interest here, then, is in the maxims or practical rules of thinking which he lays down, with the "firm and constant resolution never in a single instance to swerve from them." They are as follows: —

"First, never to accept anything as true which I do not clearly know to be such; that is, carefully to avoid haste and prejudice, and to include nothing in my judgment but what is so clearly and distinctly presented to my thought that I have no ground whatever to call it in doubt.

"Secondly, to divide every difficult matter I have to investigate into as many portions as it can be, and as may be needed better to resolve those difficulties.

"Thirdly, to proceed in due course, beginning with the simplest objects and easiest to understand, and mounting, little by little, by steps as it were, to the understanding of the more complex; assuming also an order [of sequence] among those which have no natural [obvious] precedence among themselves.

"Lastly, to make everywhere such complete enumeration and so broad revision, that I shall be sure that I have left nothing out."

In these rules, seemingly so plain and easy, we appear to notice, first of all, the childlike unconsciousness of the difficulty they will lead to in practice; that is, if we take them as a method of the discovery of truth. At first sight, for example, nothing comes nearer our notion of a simple substance than clear water, which, in common parlance, is "the

element" to this day; while chemistry and physics both pause, as it were, on the threshold of the marvels it contains. It is quite in keeping with the childlikeness of this method, that Descartes himself despatches his speculative philosophy in a single youthful sketch; while the work of his manhood and his real intellectual strength lay in the field of positive science, where his system (not his method) satisfied the most advanced minds of Europe till more than half a century after his death.

The historical importance of the method lies not in any definite result that came from it, but in its offering the first well-known example of the intellectual boldness which went behind the received opinions of the day, and the external authority they rested on, to find a ground of certitude in the mind itself. It is true that, in the matter of speculative opinion, one can (as the homely saying goes) "take out in the grist only what has gone in at the hopper." Descartes himself began his speculations as a devout Catholic, at least as one who preferred to be thought so; and to this complexion, naturally enough, his opinions came round at last. As a child, he may have heard of the burning of Giordano Bruno,* who had carried free-thought into his opinions as well as his methods; and that would serve as ample warning when he came to be a man.

The next thing we note is that Descartes, while professing a method perfectly original and independent, is in fact fettered, without knowing it, by older systems of philosophy, which furnish, so to speak,

* February 17, 1600.

the matter of his sub-conscious thought. It is clear that the value of a speculative system depends quite as much on the correctness of its data as on the accuracy of its deductions. What a man assumes he seems to himself to prove; but, really, the proof is already contained in the assumption. Now the postulates of Descartes — not those he supposes himself to start from, but those which turn up in his results — belong to that very Scholasticism which he thinks to explode and supersede.

In the first place, the method is purely subjective. The material it works upon is what the mind finds by looking in upon itself. In other words, *the thought of the mind is assumed to represent truth of fact.* This is, in short, the Mediæval realism, which regards the mind as a mirror open to a sphere of spiritual or ideal truth, which truth is to be discerned by looking at its reflection in the mirror. Thus, in his celebrated proof of the Divine existence, Descartes holds it established "as a general rule that all things which we conceive very clearly and very distinctly are all true." This is his major premise. The minor consists in finding in his thought the idea of "a Being (*substance*) infinite, eternal, immutable, independent, omniscient, omnipotent, by whom both myself and all other things that exist (if it is true that there are any which exist) have been created and produced." His conclusion is that, "since this idea is very clear and distinct, and contains in itself more objective reality than any other, there is none which is in itself more true, or can be less suspected of error and falsity." * Such is

* Third Meditation.

the Cartesian syllogism. It reminds us at once of Anselm's confident demonstration,* though it does not contain the curious play of words on which that seems to turn.

We may observe, again, that the term "idea," here employed as if it were the easiest thing in the world, belongs to old philosophical systems, and has to undergo severe analysis in a really scientific method. It signifies simply "image," or "likeness." A "clear" or "simple" idea is supposed to be a true one, — that is, to represent the fact, — precisely as the image of a planet in a reflecting telescope is held truly to represent the body in proportion as it is clearly defined, not doubled or blurred. No fallacy is in fact more constant or more subtile than that which thus takes a single sense as representing all forms of perception. Many philosophers never get so far as to see this fallacy, and reason from the visual image as if it were something more than the mere metaphor it is. What serves for a sight does not serve for a sound or a smell. If philosophers had happened to be blind, we should never have heard of "ideas" being "stored" or "residing" in the mind like microscopic photographs. As a source of knowledge, the term "idea" is narrow and misleading. It is, in short, a pure figure of speech. It denotes a process, not a fact. And it gradually gave way before the more vague and general term "impression."

Again, this system makes much of the terms "substance" and "attributes." Unable to reconcile the qualities of matter with those of mind, Descartes sup-

* See The Middle Age, p. 199.

poses two primary and incommunicable "substances," one having for its primary attribute "thought," and the other "extension." Having thus got a foundation for the two phenomenal realms of spirit and matter, — holding them as he does to be absolutely incapable of acting on each other, — he proceeds, by another metaphysical fiction, to invent a process by which spirit may act on matter; or rather, by which the motion of spirit may *seem as if* it caused a corresponding motion of matter. This device consists in a name, — another bit of unconscious realism, — the imaginary solution of the imaginary difficulty being called "assistency," and the doctrine which assumes it being known later as "occasionalism;" terms which signify that the two act, indeed, quite independently (but for the direct interposition of the Deity in every act) though with absolute correspondence, like a watch and a clock running together side by side in perfect time.

But the term "substance," assumed all along, is itself a pure metaphysical fiction, as we have seen in discussing the doctrines of the Schoolmen.* "Substance" and "attribute" are a mere though necessary piece of verbal analysis.† To make them anything more than a convenient device of logic is to fall

* The Middle Age, p. 212.

† For example, water may be thus analyzed, logically, into its imaginary "substance" and its manifest "attributes" or qualities — fluidity, transparency, and the like. Modern analysis describes it as compounded of hydrogen and oxygen, or by the symbols HO (or H_2O), because it can go no farther; not that these symbols are in the least more intelligible than water itself: they only introduce us to a different and wider set of relations.

back, unconsciously, upon the old scholastic realism, which held, for example, in the line of theology, that the "substance" of a piece of bread could be taken away, and something different put in its place, without disturbing any one of its "attributes." Science knows nothing of substance and attributes in this sense. It knows only of things with their qualities. Some of these qualities may be seen at a glance; some of them may be beyond the reach of our finest analysis. But here is the thing itself, with all its qualities, discovered and undiscovered. If it lacked any of them, it would be something else. It cannot possibly be thought of apart from them.

Each of these qualities, again, probably means some inherent force of attraction or repulsion, — force being precisely the thing which is not recognized in any of these metaphysical systems. There is no such thing known to science as a "dead," "inert," or "passive" matter. Every element of it is *essentially* active, within its limited sphere of force.* Thus, the assumed difficulty of spirit acting on matter, or the reverse, is purely an imaginary difficulty, — a mere metaphysical ghost, which the Cartesians think to lay by the magic word "assistency," implying that the direct aid of God is needed, to give effect to the act of will.

What are the properties of any given object is, again, purely a matter of investigation and of fact. The distinction of Matter and Spirit is a convenient one, because it answers to our consciousness, or our notion, of a free originating power in the human

* See below, p. 287.

mind, which makes moral distinctions possible, as well as merely phenomenal ones. But, aside from this, there is not the least difficulty, or objection, in saying that "matter thinks," or "matter acts," any more than in saying that the loadstone attracts or that heat expands. It merely means that thought, as well as motion, occurs in a given series of events, under fixed "laws of similitude and succession." The origin of thought, like the origin of any form of motion, is to us totally unimaginable and unknown. The only difference between materialism and spiritualism, of any relevancy to us, is that the former denies, or seems to deny, the fact of moral freedom. In other words, the difference is not speculative, but purely ethical.

These metaphysical quibbles are not by any means a measure of Descartes' genius. This is shown, however, in his developed algebra, in his generalized geometry, and in the magnificent physical conception (known as *Vortices*) by which he would interpret the motions of the planets, much more than in the merits of the speculative method that goes by his name. Still, it is this method, not his advance in the ways of positive science, that brings him into the line of theological development, and shows him as a pioneer in modern thought. It is the more necessary, therefore, to notice how completely, in this new line of departure, we find ourselves still in the range of those fundamental ideas which have been, consciously or not, involved in the conceptions of the Christian theology all along.

A few steps, rapidly retraced, will bring us down

to that revolution of philosophic method which goes by the name of Kant, and makes the starting-place of modern speculation.

Working on the material of Descartes, employing substantially the same phraseology, and fettered by the same philosophic tradition, Spinoza simplifies the system by assuming as sufficient one metaphysical "Substance" possessing *both* the fundamental attributes of thought and extension; that is to say, the substantial identity of mind and matter. Really, this was a very harmless metaphysical fiction, and should have been so regarded. But, in the view of his age, it meant pantheism, fatalism, the complete destruction of religion and morality. I do not know that Spinoza himself made much account of it. At any rate, he found better work in his geometry, his optics, and the really great achievement of a body of scientific ethics. His piety was real, patient, and serene; and the independence he claimed as an honest thinker he found easiest to win in great simplicity of living and in the exercise of humble manual industry.

What Spinoza had done to advance the discussion opened by Descartes seemed, meanwhile, to give it a warp away from Christian theology and from practical piety. And the same, perhaps, may be said of Leibnitz's extremely elaborate recast of the old metaphysical fiction in his "Monadology," and his system of "pre-established harmony," — all pure phantoms of the speculative intelligence. It is true that — as was said of him — he "complimented Orthodoxy as if it had been a lady;" and that he gave his system a religious turn in his "Theodicy," or elaborated optim-

ism, meant to prove that this is "the best of possible worlds." The proof of all this, it is needless to say, is found in the premises he starts with, not in the facts he would explain it by. The system itself seems to invite the ghastly parody of it which Voltaire gave in his *Candide*. Leibnitz was a man of vast erudition, — the last, they say, and perhaps the widest, of really encyclopædic minds. His real genius went into the higher mathematics, and gave the most intellectual form to the most advanced calculus that had so far been conceived. But, except for a few famous and helpful phrases (as the axiom of "the sufficient reason," for example), it does not appear that in his sublimer speculations he did much more than revolve in the orbit already traced by those who went before him.

The same fictitious difficulties before spoken of haunted those two admirable religious thinkers, of brilliant, homely, and penetrating genius, Malebranche and Berkeley, who returned upon the problem as Descartes had left it, and sought to give it an interpretation in the interest of Christian theology. Their solution is in the terms of a very refined speculative theism; and they are so nearly alike to the common eye, that the latter of them found it necessary to explain that he had not copied from the other. Both are foiled by the imaginary difficulty of mind dealing directly with matter; both meet it by a pure metaphysical fiction conveyed in a phrase of speech, — the unknowable interpreting the unknown. According to Malebranche, "we see all things in God," who is "the place of spirits," and who is in imme-

diate relation with all things that He has made, including our own spirits, which are embraced in his. According to Berkeley, the act of perception is an immediate act of God upon the mind, all external objects being purely phenomenal, devoid of "substance." Their *esse* (he says) is *percipi;* that is, they have no other existence than in the fact of their being perceived.

The logic by which Berkeley comes to this assertion is very simple and direct. His syllogism may be stated thus: First, the only objects which we directly perceive are Ideas (*philosophic postulate*). But, secondly, what we really perceive are the things themselves (*common-sense.*) Hence, thirdly, Ideas are the only things: which accordingly exist only in the perceiving mind and may be conceived as impressions made upon it by the Universal Mind. He says: "My endeavors tend only to unite and place in a clearer light that truth which was before shared between the vulgar and the philosophers: the former being of opinion that *those things they immediately perceive are the real things;* and the latter, that *the things immediately perceived are ideas which exist only in the mind.* Which two notions, put together, do in effect constitute the substance of what I advance." Again, he says: "I do not pretend to form any hypothesis at all. I am of a vulgar cast, simple enough to believe my senses, and leave things as I find them." He does not see, however, that the "idea," which he retains, is as much a fiction as the "substance," which he rejects.

Or, to restate the point a little differently. All ma-

terial things are to us necessarily purely phenomenal. That is, it is their qualities we perceive, not the things themselves; or, in scholastic phrase, we know their "attributes," not their "substance." To the non-metaphysical mind this appears to be the very recondite truth, that, if we were blind, we could not see the object; if we were deaf, we could not hear it, and so on; and that, so far forth, the thing would not exist to us. In the region of metaphysical fiction where Berkeley conducts his argument, the mind perceives not things, but "ideas" of things; that is, the images (so to speak) or impressions stamped upon the mind itself. These are all that we can know in our own consciousness; and it is easy enough to infer that the "substance," which is nothing to us, is nothing at all in itself, — a very harmless truism, or else very blank nonsense, according as we take it. If a man has had a leg shot off by a cannon-ball, for example, it neither instructs him, nor comforts him much, to be told that God is merely producing a series of impressions on his mind; that the cannon-ball has no "substance," nor his leg either! Byron's famous sarcasm is as true as it is witty: —

> "When Bishop Berkeley said there was no matter —
> And proved it — 't was no matter what he said."

Remembering that, in fact and common-sense, we deal with objects and their properties, not with the fictions of "substance" and "attribute," neither the truism nor the nonsense will be likely to trouble us. The instructive thing for us to observe is that a very able and clear-headed man, in the interest of religious

philosophy, should persuade himself that these phrases convey a useful and intelligible truth. In fact, reading and re-reading the charming dialogues in which this theory is developed, I can hardly persuade myself that Berkeley is not hoaxing his disciples, — disproving, in short, by delicate irony, the "subjective idealism" which he seems at so much pains to urge.

A clear and passionless intelligence, like Hume's, with no such religious bias, found no difficulty in persuading itself that, if the metaphysical "substance" is not needed for the phenomena of matter, no more is it needed for the phenomena of mind. "What we call a *mind*," he says, "is nothing but a heap or collection of different perceptions, united together by certain relations, and supposed, though falsely, to be endowed with a perfect simplicity and identity." * This reads like a parody of Berkeley, who says: "A cherry is nothing but a congeries of sensible impressions, or ideas perceived by various senses. . . . Take away the sensations of softness, moisture, redness, tartness, and you take away the cherry." Again,† "the doctrine of the immateriality, simplicity, and indivisibility of a thinking substance, is a true atheism," like that of Spinoza, to whose "hideous hypothesis" Hume considers that he has dealt an effective blow. "Generally speaking," he says, "the errors in religion are dangerous; those in philosophy only ridiculous."

As Berkeley, then, has reduced the material world to a series of perceptions, with nothing to perceive, so Hume reduces the whole realm of intellect and

* Essays, vol. i. p. 260. † Ibid., p. 298.

emotion to a sequence of thoughts and feelings, without anything to think and feel. This is, of course, purely a logical *reductio ad absurdum*. So Hume, unquestionably, regarded it himself. To quote his own words: "I dine, I play a game of backgammon, I converse, and am merry with my friends; and when, after three or four hours' amusement, I would return to these speculations, they appear so cold and strained and ridiculous that I cannot find it in my heart to enter into them any further. Here, then, I find myself absolutely and necessarily determined to live and talk and act like other people in the common affairs of life." His universal and consistent scepticism is simply a final word of protest against the vanishing fictions of scholastic metaphysics. It applies nowhere else, except in the field of transcendental speculation, dealing with no human interest whatever.

This bland negation of the scholastic entities was the sagacious apprehension of his youth, not the serious business of his manhood.* Hume soon turned from these barren meditations to the positive work of history, and the social or ethical phenomena allied with history. His "Essays" were felt to mean deadly mischief to the old dogmatic and metaphysical theology. And, so far as his work was merely negative, it met, naturally enough, more resentment than intelligent recognition.

The radical and systematic scepticism of Hume, it will be noticed, is simply a scepticism as to certain fixed notions ingrained in the Mediæval philosophy,

* The Essay on Human Nature, from which these speculations are taken, was written at the age of twenty-five.

and assumed without question in all schemes of dogmatic theology. The terms "substance" (*ὑπόστασις*, or *substantia*) and "idea" (*εἶδος* or *ἰδέα*), with the signification attached to them, may stand as the type of those notions. The scholastic dialect deals largely with other terms of logic or metaphysics, such as *entity, quiddity*, and the like, which are treated as if they too somehow had an objective existence; and it is hardly an extravagant caricature, when Milton, in a college poem, introduces *Ens*, as father of the ten "predicaments," and a live person in the dialogue, — like Adam, in the old German play, "going across the stage to be created." These were the conceptions of that highly elaborated and artificial style of thought called Scholasticism. They have become gradually attenuated and ghostlike through the long process we have just traced, — taking the most important and vivacious of them all, "substance," as an example, — until, in the analysis of Hume, we have seen them fade out entirely, and disappear.

The position we have now come to is *a despair of metaphysics* as a method of ascertaining truth. This, it is perhaps needless to say, is a necessary stage in the progress of thought. The ground must thus be cleared for the advance of positive knowledge, and the establishing of a scientific method. Philosophy (as generally understood) reduces itself to a "science of thought." It is an analysis of subjective states of consciousness and operations of the mind; no longer an *organon* for the discovery of the unknown. Positive knowledge can deal only with observed fact. Knowledge of the Absolute has no place in the

human understanding. And, along with metaphysical dogmatism, the province of theological dogmatism is by this process swept utterly away.*

The reputation of Hume as a universal sceptic, and the theological antipathy felt towards his name to this day testify to the bewildered surprise with which thinking men — particularly, serious and sincerely pious men — suddenly found themselves bereft of the foundations on which they supposed themselves to be standing all along. It was easy enough for an ordinary thinker to accept Hume's argument on the negative side. That superficial scepticism which consists in accepting such a result is, in fact, the symptom by which the mind of the eighteenth century is best known to us. Only one man seems to have been at once clear-sighted enough to follow out the principle to its consequences, patient and strong enough to work out the method which philosophy is hereafter bound to follow, if it is not to be a purely arbitrary fabrication, quite apart from the real beliefs and lives of men.

We have nothing here to do with what is systematic and technical in the *Critique* of Kant, any more than with the asperities of his nomenclature. Our only concern is to see how the revolution he

* As, for example, the scholastic doctrine of the Trinity. The trinity as symbol (*Vorstellung*) of the Divine life in humanity, meanwhile, remains as perhaps the best that we can get. Thus, according to Dean Stanley ("Christian Institutions"), God the Father signifies *natural religion*, God the Son *historical religion*, and God the Holy Ghost *personal religion*, "and these three are one." Here all controversy is forestalled at once; for who would care to deny such a trinity as that?

introduced stands related to religious thought, and affects the future of theology. Many a dogmatic scheme has been hazarded since his day, building professedly on his foundation, — here a scheme of elaborated metaphysics, and there a great growth of religious sentiment and fancy. Both these have their powerful fascination to large classes of minds religiously disposed; and both, no doubt, have their real value and preciousness to such minds. But it is to be observed that such value is purely personal, subjective, experiential, noway scientific. Of objective validity, of scientific verification, they are quite incapable; and so, more than they really deserve, they forfeit the respect of the modern scientific mind. The chief masters of abstract thought have been masters also of the positive science of their day. Their task has been to methodize and legitimate men's actual knowledge or belief. Without that marriage of thought and fact philosophy is necessarily sterile. Its formal structures match, at best, the theories of transcendental physics: to the adept, a pure play of technical skill; to the untrained, a blank mystery or barren curiosity; to neither, the solution of any vital problem.

The result of real moment to us from the philosophical movement that goes by the name of Kant is that it brings back religion upon the solid ground of ethics, from which it had been whirled away by the breezes of speculation, for so many centuries, into the region of metaphysical dogma. His "great thought," as touching our own subject, has been stated in quite a variety of ways. His own statement of it is very

simple and direct. The neatest and clearest paraphrase of it that I have seen is this : "That only the practical reason moves in a world of certainties; that pure thought is pure scepticism ; that we know, only inasmuch as we act on our knowledge." *

This wholesome maxim required, as we have seen, a century and a half of discussion among the ablest minds to bring it into the clear and definite form it now bears. It required a mental revolution to bring it into general acceptance among thinking men. It is not, however, anything quite new; only the revival of a very old truth. "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine," is a warning delivered at the very fountain-head of Christian history. Religious life as against speculative dogma was the very point at issue between the Christian confessors of the second century and the arrogance of Gnostic thought. The incapacity of the human mind to deal with the Absolute is stated by Novatian, in the most orthodox treatise of the third century, as an accepted maxim of Christian philosophy. Nothing but the immense construction of Christian dogma afterwards, and its legitimation by a system of philosophy which we call scholastic, — supposing ourselves to be free from its sophisms and assumptions, — would have caused the surprise and alarm that were felt, when the method of dogma itself was challenged, and the human mind was bidden to return to the safe forsaken paths.

Something more than a century has passed since that challenge was thrown down to the human reason; and as a result we see, more plainly than was

* The Spectator, Nov. 12, 1881.

possible then, what I began by stating: that the dogmatic part of the Christian creed passes into pure metaphysics, and its practical or human part into pure psychology and ethics. We have also seen that the process which has led to this result was involved in the Protestant formula itself, and the nature of the discussions which ensued as to its interpretation. Once afloat upon the wave of that interminable controversy, — of predestination, divine decrees, the bondage of the human will, and the saving efficacy of faith, — the way was open to the course of thought which has been widening out ever since.

Two side influences, however, have contributed to this result. One is the indirect effect of the growth of positive science, first interpreted by Bacon, of which I have not spoken here, because it seemed best to deal only with that which was spontaneously developed within the sphere of pure thought itself.* The other, which is here briefly traced, is the impulse given to the movement by a series of very vigorous, able, and independent thinkers, — men who, not content with the accepted theories, reasoned in their own way upon the data given them in current dogma, until one by one the old spectres of metaphysics were laid; and, without wishing or even suspecting it, men found themselves walking together upon the plain ground of fact.

This result constitutes what we may call the positive side of the Kantian method, as distinct from the critical or negative. It is, in fact, an emancipation of the intellect in the direction of pure thought, quite

* See below, The Reign of Law.

as much as in the direction of positive science. For it is to be observed that the most complete and vital systems of speculative philosophy — those which give best satisfaction to abstract thinkers, and claim highest authority as interpreters of human thought — belong to the century which has followed the great work of Kant, and are part of the movement initiated by him. Certainly, the science of Thought is the noblest and most serviceable of all the sciences, unless we should except the scientific interpretation of History, which, indeed, it may be held to include. Its perfect work would be to bring harmony and order in all the infinite complexity of men's knowledge and opinion. And, for that final result, not even the foundation could be rightly laid, until the era of dogmatism had been left behind, and the old metaphysical fictions dissolved into the metaphor and symbol which in fact they are.

VII.

ENGLISH RATIONALISM.

PARALLEL with the line of speculative thought that runs from Descartes to Kant is an independent movement of Rational Theology. That line of speculation, so far as concerns the current belief, was purely critical. Constructive theology, of any sort, was far from being either its motive or its immediate result. The opinion on such matters of those leaders in pure thought, when it happens to be expressed, is mostly conventional. Even Spinoza, when he uses the religious phraseology of his day, hardly varies from the terms of a rather mystical orthodoxy ;* and Hume, in his cool disdainful way, wishes to be understood as having no quarrel of his own with the popular belief.†

It is different with that movement of rational theology which we have to consider now. It is, for one thing, essentially English. At least, it will be most conveniently treated as the growth of English

* "I say," he writes to a friend, "that it is not absolutely necessary to salvation to know Christ after the flesh ; but it is altogether otherwise if we speak of the Son of God, that is, the eternal Wisdom of God which is manifested in all things, and chiefly in the human soul, and most of all in Jesus Christ. Without this Wisdom, no one can come into a state of blessedness."

† Those essays of Hume which might be regarded as a direct attack on revelation were not published till three years after his death.

soil, and as the characteristic achievement of English minds. It has the gravity, the common-sense, the practical aim, the impatience of mere speculation, mere emotion, or ecclesiastical authority, which are held to be qualities of the best English thought.

To a singular degree this movement is not only independent, but even, we might almost say, unconscious, of the other. Descartes and Leibnitz, it is true, were both of them eagerly studied by the better minds in England; but mostly in the line of physics, not of metaphysics, and mostly too in the way of controversy. Both of them are best known, in this connection, by their collision with Newton's magnificent Celestial Mechanics: Descartes — that is, the later school of his disciples — being worsted in obstinate fight against the new physical theory of the Universe; and Leibnitz as discredited, in his later life, by his most unworthy jealousies and assaults against the great name of Newton.* As to that process of mental emancipation, in which both names are so illustrious, it was neither needed nor much felt in the attempt to establish a rational theology, as that was now followed out in England.

For here the shock of the Reformation had of old set men's minds more completely free than they appear to have been upon the Continent, from the conven-

* This jealousy, on the part of Leibnitz, arose with a dispute as to which was the real inventor of the Calculus, which had really been discovered by both, approaching it from different directions. And it amounted to a petulance that not only refused to accept Newton's theory of the celestial motions, but sought, in private correspondence, to injure him by the charge of irreligion. Universal Gravitation, as opposed to Vortices, was "atheistical."

tional limits of religious opinion.* Not only theology was subordinate to statesmanship with the great ministers of Elizabeth's reign, who were a good deal more secular than ecclesiastical in their style of piety. But the bright intellects of that day in the world of letters were wonderfully emancipated from dogma. The great Elizabethan Revival had its pagan side, — without the grosser moral offences of that in Italy a century before, but quite as far, perhaps, from the serious temper of the Reformers.†

No wonder if Puritanism repelled those genial, brilliant, and intrepid spirits, as much as their native good sense and English loyalty saved them from the Catholic reaction. Shakspeare leaves us no hint to guess what his creed might be, or what his choice between the creeds. He was alike remote, it is probable, from either. His wide, calm, and perhaps rather sombre view of the deeper things in life — what Schlegel calls his scepticism — gave the largest field to the free play of his genius. Sir Philip Sidney was a friend of Giordano Bruno, who inscribed to him his audacious attack on superstition.‡ Their great contemporary Raleigh was charged on his trial with

* For example, the amazing attempts to effect a compromise between Lutheranism and the Papacy, so as to combine harmoniously in one system of state-religion, into which Bossuet and Leibnitz had been drawn by way of correspondence, may be compared with the much sincerer attempts of the High-Church party in England to vindicate its own Catholicity. Archbishop Laud is even claimed to have been the real barrier that protected the Church of England against Popery.

† Described with singular vigor in Taine's "History of English Literature," book ii. chap. i.

‡ The *Spaccio della Bestia trionfante.*

atheism, which reproach he might well enough share with many another illustrious name. But the faith he really had at heart appears to have been a very grave and reverent natural theism, too far in advance of his time to be recognized as piety. He was too resolute a man of action to be either a denier or a sceptic; and he is cited as first on the list of those English worthies who led the way to the pure rationalism of the eighteenth century. These sober and devout antecedents separate that movement very widely, even the most radical forms of it, from the revolutionary thought of France.

The great intelligence of Bacon did not overcome a conventional — what we might even call a courtly — way of dealing with religious questions, which disappoints us of finding in him the natural leader we might have looked for. Besides, he and minds of his cast were frightened from anything that lay that way by the portentous shapes which the new religious liberty was bringing forth. The great wave of national uplifting spent itself in an unfulfilled vision of the Christian Commonwealth. Not one who shared in that grievously foiled effort of creative genius in the religious life of England remained to be its interpreter, or to carry its spirit over into the larger intellectual life of another century.

The two names of independent thinkers in that time of revolution are Lord Herbert of Cherbury and Thomas Hobbes. It is necessary here to say a word of each.

Lord Edward Herbert (1581–1648) is very irrelevantly put first in the catalogue of English Deists, as

if he had led the revolt of reason which made so much noise a century later. His real creed was a very serious, positive, refined theism, in temper not widely remote from that of his brother, the saintly poet. The motive of his Essay was to find in natural religion as close a parallel as might be with the inward life of ecclesiastical piety, of which one element always is the near and tender sense of moral evil. Thus, in his system of a purely natural religion (as he regards it), a genuine sense of Sin and craving for Divine forgiveness are even more marked features than that awe before the unknown and appalling Forces of Nature, which is so much more apparent in our study of early religious phenomena. More, perhaps, than in any other writer who approaches the subject from the point of view of Reason, his motive is a tenderly nurtured, and what we may well call a Christian, piety.*

Hobbes (1588–1679) is a sort of seventeenth-century Schopenhauer, — like the famous pessimist of our day in his surly view of things in general and his keen, surly way of stating it; in his somewhat cowardly appeal to pure despotism as the only thing to keep other men in order and make him safe in his personal prosperities; and in his large, ostentatious, and aggressive self-conceit, as well as in the extraordinary vigor and penetration of his statement of truth on low levels, as if it were good for all levels. His trenchant and masculine intelligence, if it had been backed by any moral force, might well have brought about the

* Lord Herbert's "Life" gives one of the most curious glimpses to be found of the court and person of Louis XIII.

philosophical new birth which he seems to have attempted. Fortunately, character is for such an issue even more important than intellect. The impression he made on the mind of his time was strong, compelling a respect that shaded towards dismay. Pungent and quotable, he was looked up to by smaller men, and cited as an oracle. So great, indeed, is his reputation for a certain rude and insolent strength, that one is disappointed to find, when he comes to touch on religious things, that he is quite in the trodden track of conventional opinion ; is even ostentatiously orthodox, so far as language goes. Convictions of his own he probably had not any. The State, according to his theory, was founded "not in the mutual good-will men had towards each other, but in the mutual fear they had of each other."* His solution of the religious difficulty is that the Sovereign shall find his subjects in their creed, and that the practices of piety shall be enforced by the strong arm of Law. Speculations of this nature could not help much towards the settling of religious issues.

But the same storm which drove Hobbes to the Continent to brood over his creed of despotism, while it called Milton home to battle for his faith of liberty, had its share also in training the youth of that grave wise thinker, who did more than any other man to educate the next generation into the way of thinking most fit for Englishmen.

The philosophy of Locke (1632–1704) has been very much disparaged in our day. Brutally crude De Maistre calls it, railing at its homely terminology.

* Essay on liberty.

It is thin and superficial, leading straight to materialism and unbelief, says the transcendental philosophy, which claims acquaintance with the Absolute. It would be idle to attempt an answer to either charge. Our business is with Locke as an educator of English thought at a particular religious crisis, and as leader in a movement which has had great results in critical theology; not with the adequacy of his opinions or his method to the greater intellectual demands of the present day.

Looking, then, at the writings of Locke for the positive qualities to be found in them, we are struck first of all by the familiar modern tone in which they speak to us. Something of this, no doubt, is from the pure homeliness of his diction, which is sometimes, too, about as pungent and caustic as that of Hobbes, without his cynicism and rancor. But, still more, it is from the fact — which we are getting slowly wonted to — that the era of storm and revolution is at length behind us, and we have emerged into the atmosphere of modern life.

Taking the convenient boundary of the Reformation-period at 1650, we meet John Locke as a studious and grave youth of eighteen,— too young to have shared with Milton in the passion of the revolutionary struggle, but not too young to have had his own reflections upon the strange chaos of religious opinions which that storm had drifted into view. The modernness of his thought begins to appear as soon as we compare the earliest of his writings with the latest of Milton, — perhaps not ten years apart: in one a style antique as Plato, an idealism and a rhetoric that

have at their nearest a foreign and far-off tone to us; in the other a plainspoken and level prose, dealing precisely with those questions of reflection, of education, of political economy, closest at hand in our every-day thoughts on the conduct of life. This easy and familiar diction deceives us by making the man seem nearer to us than he is; and so it keeps us from doing justice to the real originality and merit of the work he did.

That revolutionary storm — the Great Rebellion in England, coinciding with the Thirty Years' War abroad — had proved the impotence of ecclesiastical methods or state alliances or authority of creeds or sectarian processes and protests to deal with questions that must, after all, be brought before the bar of individual reason. A century and a half of struggle had been spent in demonstrating, on a grand scale and in sight of all men, what was really implied when the Reformation announced for its first principle the integrity of the private conscience, and for its watchword, Salvation by Faith. Leaving all that controversy out of sight, the true task for a religious thinker is — the more coolly, the more devoid of religious passion or emotional fervor, so much the better — to take up the subject at first-hand, in the light of plain and practical common-sense. And for such a task the time had plainly come.

This we may conceive to be the state of the case as it lay in the mind of Locke. He approached the question deliberately, late in life, and when he had already painfully wrought out the principles of his intellectual method. His argument is a natural se-

quel to the "Essay on the Understanding."* We cannot praise the brilliancy of the result. His "Reasonableness of Christianity" is doubtless (as the phrase goes) an epoch-making book. But it is also a disappointing book. Its chief merit is in its having been written at all; that is, in having been written with that motive, and from that point of view. Still, this is a real merit, and a great one. It took the grandest and most fundamental of all practical questions — one which governments, armies, and folios innumerable had dealt with vainly, and were dismissing as hopeless — out of the limbo of metaphysical polemics, and committed it once for all to the practical understanding of men, let the result be what it would.

In religious opinion Locke was a sober and devout Englishman, of an average type, his rationalizing temper sliding easily to what is often claimed as the Unitarian dogma. It was, really, a form of Arianism, like Milton's. And, like his, it was the result of a literal rendering of texts, without any conscious naturalistic bias, or any suspicion of what at this day we should call a rationalizing criticism. Unlike Milton's, however, which remained for more than a century and a half unknown, the Arianism of Locke had a great and immediate effect on English thought, and is reflected pretty constantly in the Anglican theology for a century or more, till driven out by the winds of more recent speculation, German or other. Of biblical criticism, unless it might be the verifying

* This "Essay" was published in 1689; the "Reasonableness" in 1695.

of texts, he knew and could know nothing. His method of investigation was the very simple and obvious one, — which only needed that clear, sagacious, and honest understanding to suggest, — to search the record, and by the canons of plain sense to determine *what Christianity is.* Its reasonableness and its authority will depend on the answer we give this question first.

The answer is simple. It is, that Jesus is the Messiah in the precise and literal sense in which he was announced to the Jewish people. Only, we must interpret that sense to the understanding of our day. So interpreted, it will mean that he is the Divinely appointed sovereign of human life, especially of conscience and conduct, which are the ultimate thing in human life. His teachings are, in the strictest official sense, the Laws of his Kingdom; and these are readily shown to be rules for the regulation of human conduct, with penalties duly annexed and specified for their violation.

Apart from detail, and from the obvious deductions which follow, this is the sum of the argument of Locke's "Reasonableness." The illustrations from history and prophecy, the adaptation to the common needs and conditions of human life, we easily take for granted as they are here urged and dwelt on.

As to the profounder conviction, the passionate emotion, the inward conflict and crisis, which make so large a part in the religious life as it is commonly known to us, or as it is seen as one of the mighty agents in human affairs, — all that is passed over,

purposely as we may suppose, and studiously. It was not in Locke's temperament to enter much, either by sympathy or imagination, into that view of the case. It would be rather his wish to avoid what had been so lately the signal for fanaticism and strife, just as his main position is a barrier thrown up against any possible pretension of religion in the sphere of politics. His business is to get a solid foundation for religious belief and the practice of righteousness in the Christian record soberly interpreted; and so to save Christianity itself, as he might well think, to the sober and rather sceptical understanding of his own day.

Now a defence of religion which does not take into view any such features of it as religious passion, enthusiasm, fanaticism, may indeed furnish an excellent practical rule of life for quiet times, for well-regulated minds. Perhaps the religious battle whose smoke and din had hardly passed off might make this view of it seem the best and only safe view. But how far it is from being a complete view, every page of religious history tells. That extreme repugnance to anything like "enthusiasm," so conspicuous in the religious dialect of English respectability, down even to our own time, if not the direct consequence of the turn given by Locke to religious discussion, is at any rate in close keeping with it. In short, while the moral debasement of the religious life in England during the last century may be laid to the State Church, and the infinitely discreditable mingling of sacred things with politics,— the frigid rationalism of religious thought in the same period is the logical follow-

ing-out of the method of treatment brought into vogue by the great authority of Locke.

Locke, however, does not stand alone in his attempt to bring religion within the bounds of human reason. There were two other influences working in the same general direction, though from quite opposite quarters of the intellectual sky. These two were the speculative philosophy of a group of thinkers whom we know as the English Platonists; and the method of Geometry and Physics, which had achieved such splendid results in the realm of natural science as interpreted by Newton.

In a quiet and studious retreat from the storm of political revolution that had raged so long, we find the company of "latitude-men about Cambridge." They are cultivated scholars. Plato was doubtless much nearer to them than Descartes or Newton. They are men of a serene, devout, and intellectual type of piety, dwelling far from thoughts and things of their own day. Religious indifferentism they attacked under the classic name of Epicurus, and the materializing tendencies of science they sought to confute by patient examination of the system of Democritus. These ancient names seem far enough away from the practical issues of their stormy century; and it would not appear that this admirable school of Christian philosophers had much effect, outside a narrow circle of elect souls.

The best known names among them are those of Ralph Cudworth (1617–88) and Henry More (1614–87). Their great monument is Cudworth's "True Intellectual System of the Universe." This magniloquent

title is fairly enough matched by the wealth of erudition, the ponderous logic, the fertility of illustration, the independent and even eccentric line of speculation,* which make that remarkable treatise a serviceable authority to the student in philosophy to this day.

Very different, however, from the effect of this elaborate and esoteric school of learned thought was the splendid advance now made in the line of physical discovery. This had at length touched the common imagination. It seemed fairly to have endowed the intellect with a new instrument for finding out truth. Bacon in his *Novum Organon* had proclaimed its coming afar off; and now Bacon began to be known as the characteristic, splendid, and transcendent genius of the English intellectual world. If not the discoverer, he was at any rate the prophet and the forerunner. It is not likely that the men who really led in this great movement of Science — Newton at their head — felt any obligation of their own to that masterly and brilliant rhetoric which had heralded their achievements. But unquestionably it had done very much to prepare the intellectual soil in which this particular plant was now to flourish.

Nay, more. Not only science, so interpreted, promised the conquest of Nature to men's uses: it promised still greater things in the reign of pure thought. It would not only subdue the earth, but would scale the heavens. What it had done, triumphantly, in explaining the system of the physical

* As in the argument about the "Plastic Nature," a sort of Gnostic Demiurgus.

universe was done all the more triumphantly because it was, as it were, a national victory; and so an Englishman's adopting of it had in it the pride of loyalty to his flag as well as a simple accepting of the fact. It was, besides, an earnest of what it would do in a still more obscure and controverted realm. What, indeed, should be impossible to a method that had already accomplished so much? Geometry and Physics had been victorious in explaining the visible system of the heavens. Would not the method of geometry and physics prove the solvent, after all, of the theological problem? Would it not, at least, show how religious truth can be made to stand on the same solid ground of demonstration?

It is to some such motive as this, though perhaps not consciously thought out, that we may fairly enough ascribe the next marked step in the development of a rational theology. Samuel Clarke (1675–1729) was a disciple of Newton, a mathematician of real eminence, strong in his conviction that truth of all sorts should be proved by way of axiom, postulate, and geometrical deduction. His argument for the "Being and Attributes of God," as the foundation of Natural Religion, is to this day an accepted text-book of the method of demonstration as applied to truths which really appeal rather to the conscience and imagination.*

In what we may call the physical attributes of Deity — that Infinitude, Almightiness, Omnipresence, which we predicate of Absolute Being — the method serves well enough. At least, step by step, it challenges

* Read as the "Boyle Lectures" of 1704–1705.

the intellect to make a formal denial, or to retreat from any of its positions. The logical gap appears as soon as we come to deal with those moral attributes, which are precisely what make the difference between the Absolute which we assert and the God whom we adore. Here these processes of the understanding break down. Conscious intelligence, free-will, and moral choice are attributes which we can know only by our own experience of them; which we ascribe to God only because we project our thought or emotion upon the background of Infinity,— not because our geometry can prove them, or because we find them in our conception of Universal Law.

The value, then, of any such scheme as Clarke's lies in its premises, not in its deductions. One must be a very confirmed theist indeed, to find satisfaction in the argument.* The religious data which it affects to prove are either taken for granted unconsciously, at the outset, and so are really data of religious experience put in logical form and sequence; or else they are interpolated, more or less awkwardly, in the course of the argument. In fact, when it comes to the critical turn he confesses as much, and frankly steps out of the logical circle to gather up new material by the way. Nay, when he goes on to apply his reasoning to historical revelation,— the real goal which he would reach,— we find him dealing no longer with assumed certainties, but with slender probabilities.

The saving point in his argument is the fact that

* Clarke himself was such a sincere and revering theist. It was especially noted of him by Voltaire, that he never spoke the name of the Deity but with a certain manner and tone of awe.

it is addressed to a state of mind which has no motive to detect the fallacy, but rather a strong interest the other way. To a mind in that state the logical form disguises the substantial defect. The truth, which is believed already, is supposed to be confirmed by a process that betrays its weakness the moment it is submitted to a critical or unbelieving mind. Such as it was, however, the argument of Clarke held for more than a century its place in the Schools, where it was accepted in entire good faith, and where, very likely, it is still appealed to as a real demonstration of religious truth.

A mind grave, slow, serious, exceedingly candid, fundamentally ethical in tone, and somewhat sombre in its cast of thought — such was the mind of Bishop Butler (1692–1752) — must see the case too wisely to stake belief on such an issue. Butler's real eminence is as a moral psychologist. His chief constructive work is the vindication of ethical conceptions as a fundamental fact in human nature. When a man sees and obeys the right, as against the prompting of self-love, or any interest of his own which he is able to calculate or foresee, then he proves the existence of that fundamental fact. Butler's "Sermons on Human Nature" have the conceded merit of bringing this point, on which all the possibilities of personal religion turn, clearly into the foreground, and of fixing it in the consciousness of all who are willing to follow him in his argument.

To such a mind the geometric method of establishing religious truth must needs be painfully inadequate. Butler does not enter into any controversy with Clarke.

In one sense, they had both the same thing to prove, and only different ways of proving it. One deals with the smoothest abstractions of pure thought; the other with the hardest facts of real life. Clarke approaches historical Christianity by way of axiom, postulate, and deduction. Butler achieved the theological masterpiece of his century by a course of illustrative reasoning, to show the "Analogy of Religion, natural and revealed, to the Constitution and Course of Nature."*

One is tempted, just here, to contrast his treatment with the spontaneity and joyousness which we find in the great expressions of ancient faith, — in the Hebrew Psalms and Prophets, for example; or with that infinitely more serene and cheerful faith which we constantly find associated with the liberal thought of our own day. But the contrast would not be just to the position which Butler holds. He was committed, by public station and doubtless by sincere belief, to the defence not of the glad and comforting convictions of a natural piety, but of a system which had in it many things which the natural reason finds hard to accept, hard to be reconciled to, hard even to pardon in those who sincerely hold them. His own mind was naturally of a sombre cast, as was just said; and these difficulties, moral even more than intellectual, were very present to his thought. The key-note to his whole discourse is the words found in the introduction: that, granting the system of Nature and the Christian scheme of salvation to have proceeded from the same Author, "we must expect to find the same difficulties" in the one as in the other.

* Published in 1736.

This, it must be confessed, is a harsh and discouraging key-note. To add to the plaintiveness of it, Butler is keenly conscious that he is addressing a generation which, with undoubting profession of natural theism, was fast growing disaffected to the whole scheme of that official theology, which he is bound to uphold. One may easily find something depressed and reluctant in the tone in which so excellent a man finds himself obliged to hint at the terrors and menaces which that theology has in reserve. He feels at heart that an argument *ad terrorem* is bad in logic, however useful it may be to serve a desirable end.*

Besides, the nature of the argument, as he himself puts it, obliges him to bring the "difficulties" to the front. Those in our common experience of things, which cannot be denied, must be set off against those in the articles of dogma, which men are very eager to deny. "If plagues and earthquakes break not Heaven's design," — and you will admit (he says) not only that such things are, but that they are Heaven's design, — then on what ground can you possibly object to the likelihood of judgments infinitely more dreadful in the unseen world? If we every day find the innocent suffering for the guilty, and the tender-hearted continually taking up the burden of others' calamity and grief, then what have we to say against the scheme of the Vicarious Atonement, which asserts that the same holds good as the universal law? How do we

* It is observable that, while Butler speaks of retribution in the future life as the result of general (spiritual) laws, he nowhere hints — as he so easily might — at their possible disciplinary or even purgatorial character, though this last is the familiar doctrine of the Eastern Church.

know that it is not the only condition by which the Divine wrath may be pacified, and the Elect received into eternal joys?

Truly this argument is not an amiable persuasive to piety! Our natural feeling about such things is not any better reconciled to infinite horrors by finding ever so many finite ones that cannot be gainsaid; or to a scheme which on the face of it is the deification of favoritism and injustice, by seeing that justice is ever so imperfectly carried out before our eyes. The natural man, if he has the average courage along with a rough sense of right and wrong, resents being *bullied* into accepting what looks to him both unreasonable and unfair, by hints (such as abound in Butler) that it will be for his interest to accept it and make the best of it. This moral difficulty lies at the very threshold of Butler's method; and he knows it.

One thing more. I have spoken of the probable effect of this argument with the rude average mind, half inclined to religious belief of some sort, — which we may assume to have been the ordinary scepticism of Butler's day. It is still another thing when we consider the scepticism of our own day, which has learned to talk glibly of an unconscious Absolute, and a law of impersonal evolution, even if it has not accepted the dogma of a downright pessimism. To such scepticism as this, Butler's argument is, as Dr. Martineau has called it, "a terrible persuasive to atheism." If it is true that natural and moral evil are the prevailing thing in human life, — if they are to be thrust in our faces and compelled upon our thought in the very front of our discussion of religious verities, — then

surely our best refuge is to believe in no governing Mind at all, and in no Future which is so prodigiously to exaggerate the horrors and wrongs of this life. Best content ourselves as we may with the narrower horizon, which at least allows us to forget that Universe of despair.

This would not be quite a complete answer to Butler's argument, since he both keeps veiled the more shocking features of his creed, and includes a good many considerations not covered by that bald statement of his main position, — particularly the fundamentally *moral* character of the Divine judgments. Still less would it be a fair charge against the man, who was excellent to the core, just, humble-minded, and merciful. But it is a fair charge against that which is, after all, the fatal thing in the scheme of theology which he professed. At least, it helps us to see how that scheme is already discredited to the human reason; how it is standing on its defence in the face of formidable attack; how the burden of proof is now thrown upon that side; how it can no longer dictate terms to the common mind, as a century before, but must accept such terms as it can get admitted in equal debate.

In short, the appeal to Reason, which was made by Locke in perfect simplicity of good faith, has served to invite a new enemy into the field. The discussion he has opened is far wider than the narrow limits which he had proposed for it. The three works which I have briefly noticed may be said to complete the task of English constructive theology in the last century. Down almost to our own day, that

theology has stood on the defensive. Its literature is a literature of apology. It is sometimes very learned and able, as conspicuously in the "Credibility" of Lardner. Sometimes it deals hard and telling blows at the adversary, as in the heat of the Deistical controversy. Sometimes it brings a vigorous good sense, a clear and manly conviction of right and wrong, into the business of religious exposition, as in a great body of practical divinity of which Sherlock may be taken as the best type.

In general, however, the theology of the eighteenth century is not reckoned to do the highest honor either to the mind or heart of England. It is too much embarrassed by the falsity of its position, as having taken a brief to defend an official creed. It is too conscious of a hostile temper in the mental and literary atmosphere. It yields to the fatality that besets a campaign too purely defensive, and finds itself, as the century wears on, getting discouraged, attenuated, and thin. From the vigorous sense of Locke, from the generous ethics of Butler, it is a long way down to the "Evidences" and the "Moral Philosophy" of the wise and excellent Archdeacon Paley (1743–1805).

In all this wide and rather sluggish current of English theological literature of the eighteenth century, there runs an undertone which betrays an uneasy consciousness of the presence of an enemy. This enemy might be stigmatized, or silenced, or overawed; but he would never own himself defeated in fair battle. The challenge of Reason had invited a line of attack against which the old weapons did not serve. That challenge had been taken up — with no conspicuous

ability, but with great pertinacity and in entire good faith — by a series of writers who have attracted more fame, perhaps, than they deserve, under the name of the English Deists.

The Deistical Controversy, so called, occupies almost exactly the first half of the eighteenth century. It began in 1696, with the argument of Toland, who proposed only to follow out more consistently the views of Locke, put forth the year before. It ended with the publication in 1748 * of a treatise on Miracles by Conyers Middleton,† which may be held to mark the position taken at length by the most rationalizing of the English conservative divines.

The general aspect which the controversy presents, considered as a chapter in the history of thought, has been thus described by Mr. Leslie Stephen : —

"It would be difficult to mention a controversy in which there was a greater disparity of force. The physiognomy of the books themselves bears marks of the difference. The deist writings are but shabby and shrivelled little octavos, generally anonymous, such as lurk in the corners of dusty shelves, and seem to be the predestined prey of moths. Against them are arrayed solid octavos and handsome quartos, and at times even folios, — very Goliaths among books, — too ponderous for the indolence of our degenerate days, but fitting representatives of the learned dignitaries who compiled them.‡

* Hume's "Essays" were published the same year ; his "Dialogues on Natural Religion" in 1779.

† University librarian at Cambridge, and author of the "Life of Cicero."

‡ A full illustration of this capital picture may be found in the alcoves of Harvard University Library, which is disproportionately rich in this department of literature.

"On the side of Christianity, indeed, appeared all that was intellectually venerable in England. Amongst the champions of the faith might be reckoned Bentley, incomparably the first critic of the day; Locke, the intellectual ruler of the eighteenth century; Berkeley, acutest of English metaphysicians and most graceful of philosophic writers; Clarke, whom we may still respect as a vigorous gladiator, and then enjoying the reputation of a great master of philosophic thought; Butler, the most patient, original, and candid of philosophical theologians; Waterland, the most learned of contemporary divines; and Warburton, the rather knock-kneed giant of theology, whose swashing blows, if too apt to fall upon his allies, represented at least a rough intellectual vigor. Around these great names gathered the dignitaries of the Church, and those who aspired to church dignity; for the dissection of a deist was a recognized title to obtaining preferment. . . .

"The ordinary feeling for the deist was a combination of the *odium theologicum* with the contempt of the finished scholar for the mere dabbler in letters. The names, indeed, of the despised deists make but a poor show when compared with this imposing list. They are but a ragged regiment, whose whole ammunition of learning was a trifle when compared with the abundant stores of a single light of orthodoxy; whilst in speculative ability most of them were children by the side of their ablest antagonists. . . .

"At the end of the deist controversy, indeed, there appeared two remarkable writers. Hume, the profoundest as well as the clearest of English philosophers of the century, struck a blow the echo of which is still vibrating; but Hume can scarcely be reckoned among the deists. He is already emerging into a higher atmosphere. Conyers Middleton, whose attack upon [ecclesiastical] miracles

eclipsed for a time that of his contemporary, was a formidable though covert ally of Deism, but belongs to the transition to a later period." *

* "History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century," vol. i. pp. 86–88. Few writers can have had both the motive and the patience to master this rather dreary chapter of modern literature; and it is matter of thankfulness that it has been done for once, with such intelligent vigor, by Mr. Stephen. I have examined, I believe, all the writers of this class whom he cites except Annet.

A list of some of the best known deistical writings, prepared with the aid of Mr. Stephen's book, may here be convenient. The entire controversy, it will be seen, turns in general on speculative argument, not on historical criticism.

TOLAND: "Christianity not Mysterious" (1696). Sequel to LOCKE: "Rationalism applied to Dogma, not to Fact."

COLLINS: "Discourse on Freethinking" (1713). Implying (but not asserting) denial of Supernaturalism.

WOLLASTON: "The Religion of Nature Delineated" (1722). Sequel to CLARKE: including the moral argument for Immortality from the misery in the world.

WOOLSTON: "Six Discourses" (1727). Absurdity of the Argument from Miracles (coarse ridicule).

TINDAL: "Christianity as old as the Creation" (1730). The difficulties of an historical revelation.

CHUBB: "Tracts" (8 vols., 1730). Anti-sacerdotal: the simplicity of Christ's doctrine.

MORGAN: "The Moral Philosopher" (1737). A "Christian Deist": weakness of the argument from Miracles.

DODWELL, H.: "Christianity not founded on Argument" (1742). Faith is the abnegation of Reason.

ANNET: "The Resurrection of Jesus examined" (1744). Reply to Sherlock's "Trial of the Witnesses" (violently hostile and scornful).

MIDDLETON: "Free Inquiry" as to early Ecclesiastical Miracles (1748). There is "no breach of continuity between sacred and profane history."

BOLINGBROKE: "Letters on History" (1753). An attack on Theology generally.

HUME: "Natural History of Religion" (1779). Including the Argument against Miracles from the Universal Order.

The details of this long controversy must be left to the literary historian. A very brief view of certain points suggested in it, or of impressions that result from a general study of it, is all that can be admitted here.

Coming to the reading of the deistical writings with the ordinary prepossessions about them, one finds, with some surprise, that most of them are not — in profession at least — attacks upon Christianity. At least, there is nothing on the face of it to convict the writers of ill faith in what they profess to mean as defence and not attack. It is hard to see how Toland's "Christianity not Mysterious," or Tindal's "Christianity as old as the Creation," is not fully as legitimate a vindication as Locke's "Reasonableness of Christianity." They do not, as yet, assail even the supernatural element in the biblical record. Doubtless they go farther on the same road that Locke had travelled; and doubtless the more modest beginning led the way to sharper and more radical attacks.

The ostensible defence may even have been really a covert attack. Locke had already gone in that direction as far as it was safe to go; and the professional theologians who followed him preferred to keep the discussion within the lines they deemed prudent, and resented that unwelcome intrusion on their domain. But, after making every allowance, the surprise remains that the alarm was sounded so soon, and that the discussion at once bred so much ill blood. It was a thin boundary, at best, that parted the rationalizing theologian from his rationalistic opponent. From the point of view of our own day, the

"Deist" of the eighteenth century would easily retain his "Christian" standing without reproach.

This remark does not apply, of course, to some of the later deists, as Annet, Woolston, and Chubb; still less to the downright revolutionary assault of Thomas Paine, at the end of the century. But, on the other hand, as the discussion deepened in acrimony, it brought out things quite as bad on the orthodox side as anything they were meant to answer. Waterland's defence of the Bible, at the points which had been assailed by a criticism that at least was made in the name of morals, decency, and humanity, — such, for example, as the atrocities of the Conquest, — is full as brutal as anything he replied to. It is far more damaging to the cause of religion than the worst things that can be quoted from the deists.*

The best excuse that can be made for such things is that they are, after all, but following in the steps of Butler; and, by the standard of that day, Butler is both a wise man and a saint. It is but running out, into gross exaggeration and unconscious travesty, the argument of the "Analogy;" and this had been amply sanctioned by the best esteemed theologians of the time. In its moral effect, the controversy thus did the great service, that it *forced the hand* of the popular theology. Surely, it was quite as important that Religion should be reconciled with the general conscience of men, as with the exigencies of an established Church, or with those of its official defenders.

Intellectually, the effect of the controversy is most

* See Stephen's "History of English Thought," vol. i. pp. 258–260.

plainly seen in the pre-eminence now given to the historical evidences of Christianity. In one way, this was a great gain. The attitude of self-defence is at best a humiliating one; all the more, when a creed dominant for a thousand years must defend itself before the very tribunal which it has created and invoked. The historical method opened up, in comparison, a dignified and healthy occupation for the theological mind. In such works as Lardner's "Credibility" (1723–43), it shows not only a genuine learning, but an intellectual modesty, patience, and breadth, which very much redeem the damaged reputation of this period in theology. Most of the better-known names in this field, for something like a century, are the names of those who took that track. Leslie's "Short and Easy Method" (1697), Sherlock's "Trial of the Witnesses" (1729), West "On the Resurrection" (1727), and Paley's "Evidences" (1794), all follow the historical method with more or less success, and hold their ground in some quarters as authorities till now.

But the historical method has perils of its own, no less than the metaphysical. If the element of reason is to be admitted at all, history offers it the widest and most inviting field. Historical criticism, in fact, means nothing else than unsparing rationalism applied to alleged facts of history. It speedily leaps the boundary set to separate sacred from profane. It must not refuse to apply its canons, as to fact and legend, with absolute impartiality. Once quit the realm of metaphysics, once abandon the defences of church authority, the result is plain. Virtually, modern criti-

cism accepts the method of the Deists, while it cavils at their positions, and treats their poor scholarship with a pitying disdain. It is very significant that the two English historians of recognized eminence, in this age of the Apologists, are Hume and Gibbon.

It is still more significant, that what the controversy could not do by the crude and acrid processes of party warfare has been peacefully done, almost without controversy, by the solvent of a more radical philosophy and a riper scholarship. The English Church, which a century ago thought it must find salvation by such discreditable methods as those of Waterland and Warburton, now accepts unchallenged in its highest places of preferment such names as those of Professor Jowett, Dean Stanley, and Bishop Colenso. These names represent a rationalism far more intelligent and thorough-going than that which their predecessors of the last century dared not tolerate.*

The solvent which has soaked all hardness out of the Articles of that Church, leaving them to take any shape or meaning that may be in demand, was elaborated by a long course of critical study, directed by a very plastic and refined philosophy, peculiar to our century. We may condemn the casuistry which permits a man to sign Articles he pretends to no belief

* The Rev. Stopford Brooke (it is understood) was urgently pressed by Dean Stanley not to abandon his position in the Church, after his rationalistic attitude had been openly pronounced; and Archbishop Tait was as urgent to retain Mr. Voysey, by any possible latitude of interpretation, as the churchmen of a hundred years ago would have been to exaggerate and stigmatize his heresies. — See London *Inquirer* of Dec. 23, 1882.

in, — the stigma of Broad-Church liberalism. At least, the insolent bigotry, which Johnson gloried in and Burke was not quite free from, is no longer possible to-day. The deistical controversy had its full share in bringing the new liberty to pass.

One other thought occurs, in looking back upon that acrimonious and weary battle. It was, as before hinted, a drawn battle. Neither side abandoned any of its positions. Neither party gained any perceptible advantage upon the other. At least, whatever advantage there was went into the general advance of human thought, and furnished material to be worked up in other forms.

One thing survived. The indomitable and pertinacious temper of the attack will not confess defeat, and rallies fresh after each encounter. To what shall we ascribe the obstinate vitality of this insurgent temper? How shall we explain this indefatigable assault upon all that was honorable and of good report in conventional English piety? We see a small and despised group of men, none of them very learned or wise or able, who for some reason are willing to stand out, for some small shred of truth, against all the respectability and most of the learning of their time. It is easy enough to disparage their work and the men who did it. They may have been driven by a spirit of restless vanity and mere adventure, like Toland; or by an irregular literary ambition, like Tindal; or by some feeling of human pity, like Wollaston. They may have been heady and crackbrained theorists, like Woolston; or rancorous polemics, like Annet; or crude and ignorant dogmatists, like Chubb.

Truly, these are neither the names nor the men whom mankind delights to honor.

All the more, there is something in the mere pertinacity of their warfare to command our respect. The warfare is often sterile and pitiful in the petty points it raises. These points may be and often are crudely and blunderingly put. We wonder, sometimes, at the contrast between the mean ability of the combatants and the loud noise they made. But one other thing is still better deserving of our notice. It is, that men no more distinguished in learning, temper, and understanding than the English Deists, — men so little esteemed in their own day, and by common reckoning so contemptible ever since, — were yet found worthy, by the mere hardihood of their loyalty to their poor fragment of truth, to furnish one indispensable link in the widening tissue which that age was weaving in the religious evolution.

VIII.

INFIDELITY IN FRANCE.

INFIDEL is a term not of intellectual difference, but of moral reproach. It is, especially, a term of theological hate. It is often used, wrongly, to imply simple unbelief, or even difference in belief. Rightly used, it means either *enemy of the faith*, or *traitor to the faith*. And it is chiefly in this last sense that I shall take it now.

That infidelity, of one sort or another, was the source of the great catastrophe which befell France a century ago, is one of the commonplaces of the historian. Perhaps it has never been illustrated more vividly than by Carlyle in his "French Revolution." In a certain way, too, everybody is agreed upon the symptoms of it, and agreed in associating it with the general national decline. Political honor and social morals were quite as thoroughly diseased as religious faith. Such symptoms always go together. When general virtue is decayed, when men have lost confidence in one another, when there is a blunted sense of what makes the real welfare of a people, or a hardness of heart that does not care for it, — which are everywhere and always the painful signs of social degradation, — there will also be a loss of faith in what we may call Eternal Justice and the Universal Life. To the minds of men at such a time God is, so

to speak, dead. And of all calamities that can happen to a man or a people this is to be reckoned the worst. As it proved then, it opens the way to every other calamity.

In a general way, this has always been connected with the moral corruption of the Church in France during the eighteenth century. The names of Cardinal Dubois, early in the century, and of Bishop Talleyrand, at its close, are understood to represent that state of things spiritual, which was assailed by the galling criticism of such men as Voltaire and Diderot. By a monstrous misuse of terms, these last have been called "the infidels" of their period, as if there were no other; and have been made to bear the odium of its religious decay. But the root of the disease was in the Church itself. It was ecclesiasticism divorced from humanity that led the way to all the rest. And for this we need not look beyond the French Church, as distinct from the Catholic world at large. Voltaire is usually represented as a mocker, an unbeliever in anything holy, at best as a brilliant man of letters. But when he was received in that wonderful popular ovation in Paris, a little before his death, the withered old man of eighty-four was pointed out to the crowd as the same generous enthusiast who once saved the family of Calas, — a Protestant, whose death was a frightful judicial murder, the most conspicuous crime of the French priesthood in that century. It was such crimes as these, such attacks and defences as these, that created what we call the era of Infidelity in France.

The disease was long ripening, and for some even

of its later symptoms we must go a great way back. It would be convenient to take for our starting-place that most cruel act of despotic authority, the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, in 1685. This date alone is very significant. Only three years before, Louis XIV. had won the co-operation of his clergy in asserting what are called the "Gallican Liberties," * which virtually gave him just such a national Church as Henry VIII. had sought to establish in England, — independent of Rome, a political tool of the Sovereign, and at the same time savagely tenacious of its Catholic Orthodoxy. We might suspect, if we did not know, that this immense concession to royal power was the pledge of alliance to some evil end. It was so. The Gallican Liberties were the purchase-money of religious persecution. And the first act of that alliance of crown and mitre was to repudiate what little was left of the policy of toleration solemnly adopted in the religious peace of 1598.

But we must go still a few steps farther back. The Edict of Nantes † had granted to the Protestants certain local liberties and powers, which their political chiefs seem to have abused, so as to threaten secession from the Kingdom and an independent Protestant Republic. Thirty years later (1628), this ill-conceived

* These liberties were registered in the famous Four Articles, which were substantially these: 1. The abolition of the Pope's temporal power in France; 2. That the Council is of authority superior to the Pope; 3. That ancient usage shall not be infringed (a very elastic article); 4. That the Pope's decision is subject to ratification by the Church. Virtually, however, these liberties did not outlast the lifetime of their founders.

† This was at best, says Lanfrey, "a derisory compact between the strong and weak, to be interpreted by the strong."

political dream was dispelled by the capture of La Rochelle, the Huguenot capital by the sea.* The local liberties were destroyed, but Richelieu honorably protected the freedom of Protestant worship. While those restless nobles, the Rohans and Condés, speedily forsook the cause of their fellow-religionists, and ranked among their persecuting enemies, the main body of the Huguenots became the pious, peaceful, non-resistant, industrious, middle-class population best known by that name in later history. Their modest prosperity stirred the greed of their Catholic neighbors, and their harmless privileges kept up the rankling jealousy of the Church authorities; for the Church was fast bound by interest and tradition to the policy of an all-engrossing centralism, which made it the natural ally of a despotic Court.

The Protestants were shielded in part by the interests of the State, represented by such financiers as Colbert, who managed to persuade the king that he could not afford to ruin these peaceable, convenient, and profitable subjects of taxation. It was to break down this shield that the effort of the Church was now turned.

The king's treasury, what with his wars and his dissipations, was always hungry. The most convenient source of supply, at particular times of need, was the treasury of the Church. Once in five years

* It is said that when this city had, in 1621, to signify its loyalty, chosen the motto "PRO CHRISTO ET REGE" for the public seal, an engraver, to gratify the more zealous of that party, inserted a G in very faint lines, so as to read "GREGE" to the instructed eye: not *Christ and the King*, but *Christ and his Flock*. (See Disraeli's Charles I.)

an ecclesiastical convention was held, and at these times the royal messenger would present himself, to solicit voluntary gifts from the representatives of the Church. It will be interesting to listen a moment to his high-flown and complimentary harangue. It is in 1660, and the clergy have made complaint of certain privileges granted to the Protestants three years before. The king, he claims, ought not to be bound by conditions in receiving what is his by right.

"Still," he adds, "the conditions you have annexed have not checked his Majesty's good-will. He grants them liberally, and in anticipation of your gift. The vapors raised in his mind by this little heat [of the dispute] have but caused a dew, which has congealed in a gentle shower of decrees and declarations, which I bring you as tokens of his regard. . . . Here are the letters which revoke the grant of 1657. In a word, I bring you all you have demanded."

The purchase-money of this concession was two million livres. Again, five years later: —

"My lords (*Messeigneurs*), on entering this hall I felt, from the splendor of your presence and the purple of your robes, the effect of those rays of the rising Aurora upon the Egyptian statue of her son, which each morning she touched with life and moved to melody. . . . The reservoirs of the king are void and dry. It is for you, my lords, to consider the rank of him who asks, and the justice of his demand."

The clergy reply with very severe conditions, especially the exclusion of Protestants from certain posts of education and law. These the king yields

at the price of four millions. Again (after some prefatory phrases), in 1670 : —

"The overwhelming splendor of this celestial constellation dazzles me, and makes me for the moment incapable of speech, but for the friendly aspect of our sovereign Sun, which invigorates my vision by the assurance that I represent his will. . . . By the sovereign Sun, I mean our incomparable monarch of France ; and this title I think belongs to him of right, not only as the first luminary of France but of the entire world ; before whose glittering rays the brightest lights of other monarchies feel their shining beams grow dim."

This means money, and a great deal of it, for which "the king will deal with them royally." But offence has been given by some relaxing of persecution, and a long list of conditions, signed in blank beforehand, brings into the royal treasury not much more than two millions. Twenty years later, when bigotry had done its perfect work, this was increased to the then "enormous" figure of twelve millions.

Five years before the final act of Revocation, the king had so far conceded to the Church as to authorize the "dragooning" of his subjects into piety. What this horrible word means in its literal and happily almost forgotten sense, let us try imperfectly to understand.

"It was in this year 1680 that Marillac invented the dragonnade. The soldier lends his hand to the priest ; the dragoon turns missionary ; all goes now by tap of drum. This is the way of proceeding of these soldiers in cassocks, these mounted priests, these extemporized preachers for the glory of the Lord ! Their sermon is composed

in several heads. First head : a company and a half of cavalry is quartered on a family, and the household is ruined within a week. Second head : as this does not suffice for its conversion, they try severer measures (*question extraordinaire* *) ; the dragoons beat the men, abuse the women, and drag them to the church-doors by the hair of their heads. Thirdly : if this does not succeed, they burn the feet or hands of the sufferers with slow fire, — an invention of their own, or rather a reminiscence of the Inquisition : this is thirdly and lastly. Yet not all ; for, as the soldier is naturally gay, he will vary the programme with jests and entertainments of his fancy. Detachments are set about the Huguenot, to keep him from sleeping for days together. They pinch, prick, and pull, till the poor wretch yields to the long torture, and sells his faith for a little slumber. They do it all with a clear conscience: they have their dispensations. And have they not the approval of the court ladies? 'The dragoons make the best of missionaries,' says Madame de Sévigné, who has looked into the matter. What need of more ? " †

Such poor privileges as were left, under this atrocious system, were taken away by the "Revocation" of Oct. 15, 1685. Even this, while forbidding the public exercise of worship, permitted the Protestants "to remain in the kingdom without liability to be troubled on account of their religion." But a month later — on a complaint that this proviso might check conversions — came a proclamation removing this last frail defence ; and then "the persecution began!" There are degrees in estimating the horrors that en-

* A technical term of judicial torture.

† The above illustrations, with several which follow, are taken from Lanfrey's *L'Église et les Philosophes au Dix-huitième Siècle.*

sued, as we compute the number of exiles at less or more. The accounts vary by some half a million. But the nature of the act, with the detestable bargaining and chaffering that led to it, we have seen plainly enough already.

It is not the mere act of persecution that makes the chief horror of this thing. It is the debauching of the ecclesiastical conscience: Bossuet, who holds mixed marriages a sacrilege, to be broken off at all cost, palters with the king's flagrant vices, saying, "I do not demand, Sire, that you quench in a moment so hot a flame,— that would be impossible; but at least, Sire, endeavor to check it by degrees." It is the enslaving of a noble nature to be a tool of cruelty and injustice: Fénelon, who would fain try the way of persuasion only, must propitiate the Court, and writes: "There are hardly any of the Religion left in Rochelle, since I offer rewards to the informers. . . . I am putting the men in prison, women and children in convents, by authority of the bishop." And again, a few months later, "I think the king's authority ought not to relax at all." It is the deadening of common charity and mercy: Madame de Sévigné, the loveliest woman of her time, ravished with joy that the king has led her out to dance one day, says of the Revocation, "Nothing is so noble as that Act; no king has done or will do anything so memorable!" It is the stifling of every generous sense of justice: Arnauld, who knows what persecution is, thinks, perhaps, to ward off the reproach of a Protestant leaning of his own when he says, "These ways are something rude, but not at all unjust."

These four names represent to us all that is ablest, noblest, fairest, boldest, in the great age of the French monarchy. "If they have done these things in the green tree, what will they do in the dry?"

So far, the Church of France may plead, perhaps, that though her acts may have been mistaken, yet at least they were sincere. But very early in the following century that poor plea comes to naught. Massillon, one of the few court preachers whose tone really touches the conscience, was also the last of the great French ecclesiastics who can be said to have retained his faith. His hand had helped to consecrate that paragon of hypocrisy and craft, the Abbé Dubois, whose strange intrigues to buy a cardinal's hat make the comedy of this age of the Church, as the persecuting acts make its tragedy.*

The flaunting infidelity of the Orleans Regency (1715–1723), of which Dubois may be taken as the type in things spiritual, at least gave a little respite to the rigor of ecclesiastical law. It gave, too, the opportunity for those two keen strokes of satire aimed at the reign of Hypocrisy, — Voltaire's "Œdipus"

* At the table of George IV., when Prince of Wales, the conversation once turned upon the question, Who was the wickedest man in history? Rev. Sydney Smith, being present, gave his voice for the Regent Orleans, adding a little awkwardly, "and he was a prince." The Prince, with ready tact, replied, "I should give the preference to his tutor;" adding, "and, Mr. Sydney, he was a clergyman." (Fitzgerald's Life of George IV.) Dubois, said the Duke St. Simon, "exuded mendacity at every pore." "You could see the falsehood in his eyes, as in those of a young fox," said the mother of the Regent. She could not pardon the levity with which Dubois had treated the early vices of his royal pupil. (*Nouvelle Biographie Générale*).

(1718), which attacks an official priesthood in a few vigorous lines by the offended Queen; and Montesquieu's "Persian Letters" (1721), which make a piece of irony upon French society of the period, from a man-of-the-world's point of view, as smooth and effective as Pascal's *Provinciales* against the Jesuits from the point of view of a moralist.

But religious liberty had nothing to hope at such a time and from such a source. The infamies of the Regency were immediately followed (1724) by a sharp turn of persecution against the Protestants. "On the mere deposition of a priest, their pastors were put to death, their dead dragged upon the hurdle, their disciples chained in galleys, their women shaven, beaten with rods, cast into prisons, or into wet dungeons," whence, long years after, a few of them were delivered, insane with griefs and miseries. These horrors were perpetrated in an age which had forgotten even the decencies of the profession of Christian belief. It is impossible to suspect the men guilty of such things of being moved to them by either of those chief pretexts of persecuting cruelty, faith or fear.

A few years later (1730) the edict of intolerance * was revived against the Jansenists. But this, instead of opening directly a new period of persecution, led the way to a strange outbreak of fanaticism, which lasted in various shapes for more than thirty years, and may be regarded as the expiring effort of the so greatly degraded ecclesiastical faith of France. Two

* Contained in the Bull (*Unigenitus*) of Pope Clement XI., in 1713, condemning in the lump one hundred and one maxims of Jansenist piety.

forms of it, in particular, are associated with the two rival religious parties. The "Worship of the Sacred Heart" belongs to the story of the Jesuits. The "Convulsions," with the atrocious cruelties that followed, and make the last worst chapter in that long story of intolerance, are the special stigma of the Jansenists.

The "Sacred Heart" — a sort of grotesque parody of Mediæval realism — is a symbol, to be taken in its most gross, literal, and bloody sense, revealed (1688) in the disordered dreams of a sickly, ignorant, and half-witted girl, Maria Alacoque. It figures a literal exchange of hearts between the devotee and Jesus, who plucks his own, bleeding, from his bosom, — an ignoble travesty of the words, "My child, give me thy heart." It signifies the religion of mere sentiment, in its most morbid and debased condition. The phrase by which it asserts itself is that "Love — mere love — is the object, the motive, and the end." We easily see what debauching of the intellect, what enslaving of the will, is sure to follow from this exaggerating of the blind emotion. The worship of the Sacred Heart, assiduously nursed by the bigotry which so easily finds its opportunity, was consecrated at length by papal edict (1765), and became a type of those debasing forms of sentimental piety out of which modern Romanism has sought, in France especially, to made a religion for the ignorant, protected by fanatical stupidity against all assaults of reason, and all invasions of a sense of right.

The Jansenist party had long outlived the heroic memories of Port Royal. Their shield from persecu-

tion now was made up of inordinate fanaticism within, and a hard cruelty without. In 1727, when they were threatened with new severities, it chanced that one of their popular saints, the Abbé Pâris, died and was buried. A crippled beggar bethought him soon after of finding a remedy by lying upon the tombstone of the holy man, which he did daily, to the jest, scandal, or admiration of the gathered crowd. The healing did not come to pass; but in the course of some weeks came nervous convulsions, real or assumed, which daily more and more stirred the multitude as something miraculous; and, in a tempest of popular frenzy, it was given out that the shrunken limb had begun visibly to lengthen, — a report duly chronicled and improved upon from day to day.

This was the beginning of what makes a very humiliating but only too familiar chapter in the history of superstition, the story of the *Convulsionnaires*, with a long array of astounding miracles, duly vouched and verified.* How long it lasted, and just what shapes it took, we cannot tell. Its most extraordinary exhibition was in a scene which took place on Good Friday of 1759, and was recorded in detail by duly accredited witnesses: the crucifixion of Sister Frances. This poor girl lay in a sort of trance, having kissed the crucifix, and touched the relics of the holy Pâris. After she had been scourged with some sixty blows, on back and breast, and laid out flat upon a light wooden cross, and her hands — which had been pierced in the same way about six months before —

* Five of the most signal of these were afterwards judicially investigated and condemned.

had been wet with a rag steeped in holy water, this is a part of what followed: —

"Having wiped the hand the director proceeded, with four or five blows of a hammer, to drive a square iron nail, nearly three inches long, through the middle of the palm of the left hand, till it entered several lines into the wood, as I afterwards verified. After an interval of two minutes, the same priest nailed the right hand in the same way. She appeared to suffer much, but without sigh or groan, only her face showed signs of pain. This was at seven o'clock. At half-past seven her feet were nailed to the foot-rest with square nails over three inches long. A quarter of an hour later, the head of the cross was raised three or four feet; and after half an hour the other end was raised in like manner. At half-past eight the cross was lowered, then raised again, and the points of naked swords were set to her breast. At ten she was laid down again, and the nails drawn out with pincers, when she ground her teeth with pain; but previously the right side was laid bare, and pierced with a spear. She asked for drink, and was given a mixture of vinegar and ashes."

Such performances might move the pity, but must certainly deepen the contempt, of those mocking philosophers who were now the only champions of Reason in France. After all, an age must have such prophets and apostles as it can get. Most likely they will be as good as it deserves, and, possibly, the best fitted to its needs. The sharpest weapon to be lifted against that system of cruelty and unreason which now bore sway in the name of Religion, was the weapon of contempt. In that warfare our sympathy goes with him who is daring enough to strike

the blow. If he is not quite such a man as we should have chosen, or quite such a man as we can honor, it is a fair question how such a man was likely to exist, out of prison, in such a state of things. At any rate, something had to be done, unless the whole fabric of morals and free intelligence was to rot away inwardly. Voltaire and Diderot might possibly do a better work than better men. At need, God can make the mockery as well as the wrath of man to serve him.

The first open protest of reason against the popular superstition is generally regarded as having been Bayle's treatise on the Comet (1682), — this erratic visitant being then first distinctly registered in the system of unvarying celestial law, not as a miraculous token of Divine wrath. This was a declaration of hostilities against the existing religious order; and Bayle had to live as a fugitive in the free States of Holland, — a hero of letters, too, in his way, — toiling meanwhile at the enormous task of his "Dictionary" (1696–1702). When this came out, "so great was the avidity to have sight of it, that long before the doors of the Mazarin library were open, a little crowd assembled in the early morning of each day, and there was as great a struggle for the first access to the precious book as for the front row at the performance of a piece for which there is a rage."* Even the learning accumulated in the numberless encyclopædias of our day still leaves space for the curious scholar, now and then, to search this audacious and amazing treasure-house of old-fashioned erudition, in which every item is (so to speak) pointed and barbed,

* Morley's Voltaire, p. 273.

— less a mere vehicle of information than a dart to sting old prejudice.

Towards the middle of the century, contemporary with the strange revival of piety just spoken of, there is a distinct attempt to methodize and popularize the new intelligence. Montesquieu's "Spirit of Laws," (1748) is a comparative study of institutions, wide if not very deep, holding up the spectacle of Constitutional liberties in England over against that "slow strangling of French civilization" which was going on under a corrupt and stolid despotism. But the great work in this direction was the "Encyclopædia" of Diderot and D'Alembert (1751–1765). This, prepared as it was under the jealous restrictions of authority, is not that complete circle of learning and science which we now understand by the term, but rather an immense number of separate essays, arranged alphabetically, including what for that time was a truly wonderful variety of information on all sorts of topics, digested with extraordinary industry by the compilers.* It was different from Bayle's great achievement, in addressing not scholars but the mass of men; and lively anecdotes of the period tell of the mark it made, when science and learning were thus brought down among the affairs of daily life. Especially it was felt — as its authors meant it should be — that here was a ponderous and very effective artillery against that mental tyranny, built on popular ignorance, which made the strength of the corrupted

* Carlyle's article on Diderot shows this aspect of it very well. Morley's "Diderot" (2 vols.), as well as his "Voltaire," is, however, a far more just and valuable study than Carlyle's.

Church. The name "Encyclopedists" speedily came to stand for all that was most daring and radical in the assault.

We have nothing, however, to do directly with this, except so far as it was one symptom in a time of intellectual revolt, one act in the long and most laborious process of popular enlightenment. In a general way it may be true that growing enlightenment in the common mind is the surest cure of superstition, and the only thing on which religious freedom ultimately can rest. But the process never goes on smoothly. Old interests and old prejudices are there, for it to chafe against; and when the course of things begins to threaten seriously, these will rally, and strike back sharp blows.

Intolerance was not dead. The most active agents of it, the Jesuits, were, it is true, getting out of favor. They had made themselves, in one way and another, odious to the authorities, so that about this time (1764) we find their establishments broken up in France, and a few years later (1773) the Order itself was dissolved by sentence of the Pope.* It was the Jansenists who now found themselves in the place of authority and responsibility. Something in the logic of persecution had charms, it would seem, for the legal mind; and the "Parliament of Paris," the High Court of the kingdom, was under Jansenist control. It might be thought fit to set an example of new religious zeal, over against the old charge of heresy. It might be that the fanaticism of the *Convulsionnaires*

* Clement XIV., who signed the sentence with a heavy heart, and, by a marvellous judgment, died the next year!

really reflected a sincere bigotry in the higher orders. At any rate, it is the Jansenist party, and no longer the Jesuit, that is held responsible for the tragedy which now ensues.

It happened, late in the year 1761, that John Calas, a Protestant tradesman of Toulouse, a man of sixty-four, and father of a grown-up family, was arrested on the charge of murdering his eldest son. The son, a man of morose and moody temper, and ill content with the sphere in life he was likely to fill, hung himself at night in his father's shop. The family, in an evil hour, protested that it was not suicide, which was then regarded as if the worst of crimes. The only alternative was murder; and the report spread that the young man was just going to turn Catholic, and was murdered by his family to prevent it. Evidence there was none, and the defence was perfect; yet there have not been wanting, even in our time, apologists for the charge. An example must be had to strike terror to the unbelieving heart, and Calas was made the victim; put through the form of trial; then tortured, and broken on the wheel, — a brutal and horrid mode of punishment, in which the wretch (unless sooner despatched by strangling or the "stroke of grace") might be made to writhe all day under the blows of the executioner, who, turning the wheel slowly, broke his bones one by one.*

* As an illustration of the horror inspired by this barbarity, see the historical instance of the execution of the young Count Horn in 1720, by act of Dubois, in the very interesting (fictitious) *Mémoires de la Marquise de Créquy* (Paris, 10 vols.). Some curious details on this subject are given in Professor Frederic Huidekoper's "Indirect Testimony," p. 210.

A little later (1765), a wayside crucifix near Abbeville was found to have been mutilated during the night. There was no one to suspect; but two boys of eighteen or twenty had given offence by singing rude songs; by omitting to show respect to some religious procession; by — who knows what? They were accordingly charged with the sacrilege, and hunted for arrest. One succeeded in escaping out of France. The other, one La Barre, was seized, and for his suspected crime condemned to have his hand struck off, his tongue torn out, and then to be burned alive. By special mercy he was beheaded before burning. Such atrocities must be remembered, in thinking of the horrors of the Revolution. The execution of La Barre was less than twenty-four years before the taking of the Bastile. Those ferocious crowds were used to the sight of just such things as these.

We have come now to the culminating acts which called forth the tempest of wrath that never stayed till the day of full expiation came. From this time forth, the system which could be guilty of it is known as "the Accursed Thing" (*l'Infâme*) among those who took upon themselves the task of assailing and crushing it. Hitherto their method had been an intellectual protest, and its sharpest weapon was mockery. Henceforth it is to be moral wrath, hot and unsparing; and its weapon is hate. The wretched family of Calas, after suffering torture and imprisonment, were sheltered, maintained, and energetically defended by Voltaire, now an old man of near seventy. For three years his efforts for them were unceasing, till he com-

pelled the sentence to be reversed and their confiscated estate restored.

For these three years, he said, he should have thought himself guilty if he had allowed himself to smile. "This is no longer a time for jesting," he wrote. "Is this the home of philosophy and delight? Nay, rather, it is the land of the St. Bartholomew. The Inquisition would not dare to do what these Jansenist judges have done." D'Alembert writes bitterly that they must make the best of the situation, mocking at what could not be helped. "What!" replied Voltaire, "you would be content to laugh? We ought rather to resolve on vengeance; at any rate, to leave a country where day by day such horrors are committed. . . . No, once more I cannot bear that you should finish your letter by saying you mean to laugh. Is this a time for laughing? Did men laugh when they saw the bull of Phalaris heating red hot?"

Voltaire (1694–1778) was no martyr, and never meant to be. He was not of the stuff that martyrs are made of. He was, on the contrary, the shiftiest of mortals, the very type of that "wise man" of the Book of Proverbs, who "seeeth the evil and hideth himself." He never hesitated, at need, to make profession of Catholic orthodoxy, or to go through the forms of Catholic piety. To the last, he could on an emergency lie with an enticing simplicity and directness that might deceive the very elect, and did deceive his best friends. He paid assiduous court to the king's mistresses, and diligently made friends of the popes and bishops of unrighteousness. Once, it is said, Madame Pompadour proposed, for better

security, that he should be made a cardinal! His scruple drew the line at that.

But his flights — into England, into Prussia, into Switzerland — were bits of strategy in a long campaign; and from each he came back armed with new weapons to fight the adversary. His retreat in the superb situation at Ferney, — which takes in the magnificent landscape like a map, from Jura to Mont-Blanc, where he gathered an industrious and thriving village, in which his bust now adorns the public fountain as that of a questionable patron saint, and where the stone chapel still stands, hard by his garden gate, with the inscription *Deo erexit Voltaire*, — was at once a sort of castle or garrison to carry on the fight, and a refuge for many a miserable exile flying from oppression. And, whatever we think of his shrewdness and thrift, as the one man of letters in that time who in the midst of so much misery kept a clear eye to his own interest, and steadily improved upon the fortune he inherited,* and never lost his faith that money was worth more than most of the things men lose it for, — he keeps at least this title to our respect, that his rare fortune was the means of a still rarer generosity.

The faults of Voltaire are familiarly enough known: his implacable mockery, which spared nothing human or divine; his looseness of living, which recognized no standard of morals, and of writing, which knew no law of decency; the void of all heroic traits in his character, except that single one, of an inextin-

* His income the year before his death, Mr. Parton estimates, was equivalent to $200,000 now.

guishable moral wrath at hypocrisy and inhumanity; with the absolute disbelief in the nobler qualities which belong to the religious life. But he was never guilty of cruelty, treachery, debauchery, or wanton vice. What we rightly enough call — and what he himself perhaps would glory in calling — his "infidelity," was strictly a reflex of the official Christianity of his age. No mockery of his could do it such deadly mischief as the long game of bribery and intrigue by which Abbé Dubois had gained his ecclesiastical preferment. No attack he could make so struck at the heart of Christianity as its absolute divorce, in judicial hands, from common charity and mercy as well as justice. No immorality he was guilty of matches the iniquity of that state of things he attacked, in which the counsel gravely given by the Regent to a young candidate for "holy orders" was virtually this: "It is not safe to live openly in adultery for a simple priest; wait till you are a bishop!"

In short, it was the official religion — it was not what we understand by Christianity — which made the object of Voltaire's implacable attack. It was this — not (as has been libellously said) the memory of Christ, the Son of Man — that he meant in his famous phrase, *Écrasez l'Infâme*, which we should best render, "Down with the Accursed Thing!" It is unfortunately true that the name of Christianity was still so far identified with the law of morality that, in assailing the one, Voltaire and his associates also defied the other; that their revolt against the system included revolt against the Ten Commandments,

especially the Seventh. Along with the austerities of early Christianity, they hated and despised such poor shreds of its morality as were left. But the official Church of France had kept no terms with Reason, and left no door open by which it could enter. Christianity — so far as that could do it — was forbidden to widen out into a religion of humanity and justice. There could be no compromise, no gradual evolution from one into the other, such as took place in Protestant countries. And so this great calamity befell,—that Reason, distorted and dwarfed, could only speak through the lips of the sworn enemies of Religion.

Just then, the words *humanity* and *justice*, and the thing which these names represent, made the particular need of the religion of the time. These words had, for want of better, to be spoken in the way of defiance and with sharp emphasis by Voltaire and those of his school. He has been called "an impassioned Bayle." But we see at once the weakness and limitation of any word, even the most needed, spoken so in mockery and hate. It is at best a negative word, a protest, provisional and preparatory. The gospel of the time, such as it was, must find for itself a positive expression, such as it could. What Voltaire had spoken in anathema, for the destruction of inhumanity and unreason, must be said in another tone, constructively, by Rousseau, and thus become the popular manifesto of a positive, a revolutionary faith.

Rousseau (1712–1778) belongs to a younger generation than Voltaire; and there was radical alienation

between them, though their later years ran smoothly enough together, and their deaths, only a few weeks apart, linked them still more closely in the common memory. The vices and scandals of Rousseau's life offend us a good deal more than those of Voltaire; and the morbid and irritable jealousy at a more shining literary name, which he took no pains to disguise, is an unpleasant contrast to the gay and brisk wit that makes us half pardon the sins of the great scoffer. But there came a time when all hearts seemed to open suddenly to his influence, and even his inordinate claim was satisfied by finding himself the chief literary power in France.

His fame as the great Sentimentalist of his age, and as the precursor of a School of Sentiment which has hardly expired in our day, does not concern us now. A better merit is claimed for him, that he was the first to develop, in his "Émile," the rational and humane method of children's education which is so thoroughly adopted in our best school-systems now. But what gives his name its real significance for us is that he set forth, with genuine conviction and with immense popular effect, the two main articles of the Revolutionary Creed. These may be said to have inspired whatever was living and true in the great popular revolt which came afterwards to take so bloody a shape. Still more, purified by the dreadful winnowing of the Revolution, they prove to be fundamental and essential truths, which the Christianity of a later day must recognize or perish.

These two articles of faith are, one religious and one political. They are laid down, respectively, in

the "Confessions of a Savoyard Vicar," and in the "Social Contract."

In the first of these, Religion is represented in the form of a natural piety, a religion purely of sentiment, which allies itself easily enough with ecclesiastical forms, and is content to let people keep and cherish such outward symbol of it as they will. The good Vicar, who discourses eloquently on the God of Nature among the splendors of a mountain sunrise, has been touched with the Revolutionary idea, and has wrestled with doubts; but he has taken into his heart this sweet solvent of a natural piety, and, ignoring the creeds, finds more than his old joy in ministering to his simple-minded flock. This made the gospel of the early Revolutionists, down to Robespierre, and his theatrical worship of the *Être Suprême*. That it could even be a bloody faith at need, we see not merely in the acts of those sanguinary theorists, but, in particular, that at one crisis it cut off at a blow the whole party of anarchists, — Hébert and the rest, — to whom such parade of piety was a mockery and an offence. And so they perished as "deniers of God and immortality!" The axe fell faster than ever, just when Rousseau's creed received its final consecration.

The theory of the "Social Contract" entered still more deeply into Revolutionary politics, even if it may not be said to be, at bottom, the theory of republican France to-day. To give it distinct relief, we should compare it with one or two earlier expositions something of the same cast. According to Hobbes, men to whom their natural condition of war has become

intolerable agree to surrender their liberty into the hands of their chief, who thus becomes the absolute authority for their laws, conduct, and belief. The common English notion, explained by Locke, is that by mutual compact men waive such natural rights as would do others harm, keeping the largest measure of individual freedom that would be safe. According to Rousseau, the "Social Contract" makes society into an organic whole, as despotic as the despotism of Hobbes, and more popular than the constitutionalism of Locke. In short, it is the social ideal, of which the only realization would appear to be the artificial dead-level and the immitigable tyranny of Communism.

It was the calamity of France and of the world, that these two great positive conceptions — natural piety as the basis of Religion, and natural justice as the basis of the State — could not be grafted upon a stock still green and vigorous, which had in it the life of the Past. The theorists who maintained them were perhaps as bigoted and narrow as the upholders of the ancient order. At any rate, such ideas were for the present revolutionary, not constructive. They were a manifesto of defiance to existing authority, a declaration of hostilities against Church and State.

There is no need to go over again the ground of that wild, blind conflict; or to show where the fallacy or the defect lay in the new gospel of Sentiment. That makes part of the often told story of the time. It is the story, too, of all times. The evolution of Thought is not the logical and peaceful process which our theories are apt to suppose. On the contrary, the new thought has generally to attack the

old in its intrenchments. Interest and custom and authority do not give way, except under heavy blows. What came into the field, modestly enough, as a simple challenge to fair debate soon shows itself as deadly defiance, to be determined by that war of passion and brute force which we call the Revolution.

But we must look for a moment at one or two political results, which show by how wide spaces the Christian history of our century is separated from that which went before.

Under a sudden impulse of revolutionary fervor, under the direct inspiration (as we may say) of the gospel according to Rousseau, on the 4th of August, 1789, the privileges of Noble and Ecclesiastic were voluntarily surrendered. This amazing act of sacrifice upon the Revolutionary altar left the field clear to organize such a religion as the time might demand, on such a foundation as the time might accept. The clergy of France were compelled to take oath to the new Constitution; and such as refused underwent the same relentless persecution, or escaped into the same bitter exile, that had been the portion of the Protestants a hundred years before. So the guilt of a former generation was expiated in the suffering of one comparatively innocent. And the loyalty, the courage, the patience, of the exiles of the eighteenth century did something to redeem the memory of the oppressors of the seventeenth.

It proved, besides, that the Christian religion was not dead in France. The Revolution itself must by its own showing respect the voice of the people; and

this voice signified that iniquity in high places had not rooted out the popular faith, which still clung to altar and ritual. A few years later, when Democracy had grown "terrible as an army with banners," and its Chief could dictate terms to sovereigns, the new Power found it expedient to appeal to that popular faith, and plant itself upon the old foundation. On Easter week of 1802, the "Concordat," negotiated with Pope Pius VII. the preceding year, was proclaimed with ostentatious splendor, and Christianity was again declared the national religion.

But in yielding this Napoleon, in his most imperious fashion, exacted two conditions, which made it the creation of a new system, not the restoring of the old. The Roman Catholic religion was no longer "the religion of France," — as the Pope even abjectly and piteously entreated it might be styled, — but "the religion of a majority of the French people." Political — nay, popular — right was thus substituted at a stroke for ecclesiastical or divine right. France was "Christian" just as, in a different turn of things, it might have been declared Protestant or Mahometan; and such a change of title would have been prevented by no scruples of a Bonaparte. Down to this day the Roman Church is sustained by the State on the same terms, and by the same endowment in the ratio of its numbers, with the Protestants and the Jews.

The second concession wrung from the reluctant Pope was the recognition of the Revolutionary or "Constitutional" clergy. To the loyal exiles, faithful to the ancient memories, no draught could have been so bitter. The hate of Catholic against Protestant,

the jealousy of Jesuit and Jansenist, were mild beside the flaming and deadly passions of the Revolutionary period, which had tested their faith. Others, by a cowardly yielding to the storm, or by taking strange and hasty vows, held, as bishops and pastors, the places they had left. And now they must fain content themselves with "evangelical poverty," and yield as they might to the Pope's exhortations of humility and self-abnegation for the cause of Christ among his people. A few exceptions were haughtily conceded by Napoleon; but for the majority of the exiled clergy the only reward was in the praise (which many of them well deserved) that they did obediently humble themselves, and submit. No wonder the terms of this famous treaty, with the humiliations that followed, stirred such wrath and contempt in De Maistre, brilliant champion of papal autocracy as he was, that his long retreat in St. Petersburg was more tolerable to him than a return to Italy or France.*

Still, the Concordat did open the way to a Catholic revival in France, which has been in the main Ultramontane in its drift, and has from time to time held, or seemed to hold, the destinies of France in its control. Twice it has defeated the Republic, and set it back; and possibly the terrible crisis of 1870 was not the last. It has at least served to do one great mischief, in forcing political freedom into open enmity with religion again in our day. By the exposi-

* The best account of this affair is in the extended and most interesting work of D'Haussonville (8vo, 5 vols.). That of Theiner (2 vols.) gives the point of view of a zealous Catholic. Thiers has included an excellent chapter on the Concordat in his "History of the Consulate."

tion of Michelet, the Revolution was fundamentally and necessarily Antichristian, — liberty as against despotism, equality as against privilege, Justice as opposed to Grace.

This view of the conflict is an inheritance from the Infidelity of the last century in France. Here, with Protestant antecedents, in a republic more than a century old, we think no such thing. The doctrine of Rousseau went into the American Declaration of Independence, and so has given us one article of our political faith. But the same thing went into the heart of the people, in perfect harmony with the Christianity they still believed in ; and through the most devout of interpreters — especially Channing and his school — it has had its full share in shaping the liberal gospel of to-day.

IX.

THE GERMAN CRITICS.

A HISTORY of the course of Biblical Criticism would be a task of no small labor, and might easily be made the driest of human compositions. It would have to begin at least as far back as Origen's "Sixfold" collation of texts and versions; and it would have to take a new departure from Jerome's correspondence with Augustine, touching some points of interpretation in the Latin translation he was then completing.

The names and the times just mentioned give us, in fact, the double point of view which must be kept in mind in our dealing with the subject. Comparison and revision of the text only prepare the ground for the work of interpretation; and, as soon as this is once undertaken in a critical spirit, the way is open to the later, larger task of historical and scientific criticism, which makes the proper business of biblical scholarship to-day.

It was essential to the Catholic theory of authority that the Bible — assumed to be the ultimate standard of religious truth — should be hidden from the common mind in a sacred tongue, and subject only to official interpretation. This however did not, as is sometimes said, prevent its free, familiar, and extended use, in popular exhortation and address,

throughout the Middle Age. To judge from the incessant citation of it at that time, I do not see why the substance of it — whether history, doctrine, or religious meditation — may not have been as familiar to the popular mind then as now; allowing, of course, for the general slowness of mental movement in those days. And it is this Mediæval use of the sacred books which the Council of Trent has sanctioned in defining, as the highest standard of appeal, the Latin Vulgate Bible, on the basis of Jerome's version, subject to the official interpretation of duly appointed ministers of the Church.

If the end in view were to preserve the Scriptures as a recognized standard of authority, and to employ that standard only for doctrinal or practical uses, — which the common language of religionists seems to imply, — then the Catholic method is clearly right. It is meant to keep the critical spirit from intruding upon the things of faith; and, within its limits, it succeeds in doing so. But in the era of the Reformation two great blows were struck against this smooth and plausible theory. The first was struck by Erasmus, who opened the way of modern criticism by learned comparison of texts. The second was struck by Luther, who put the Bible before the people in their own tongue; and so made inevitable that search into its true character and meaning which, in Germany especially, has been so busily followed since.

The first task of the modern criticism might seem simple enough, — to ascertain the true text, as nearly as may be, by comparison of manuscripts; and then to

explain it by the better learning, exactly as the Greek and Latin classics are explained. But even in the time of Erasmus some alarm was raised by finding that the Scripture authority for certain fundamental doctrines was much weakened by the loss of favorite texts, or the doubt thrown on them. Quite early in the eighteenth century, long before the question of the divine authority of Scripture was seriously raised, this alarm went higher, when it was found that by diligent search and comparison the number of "various readings" had been brought as high as thirty thousand. This seemed to show that the Bible had not, according to the favorite hypothesis, been miraculously kept from change all those centuries as the one infallible Word of God. That the alarm was real, and was felt by the gravest minds, is shown in the following passage, which I copy from John Owen, a theologian of that day (1616–1683), whom Coleridge praises in particular, as one of the soundest and ablest of English divines:—

"If these hundreds of words were the critical conjectures and amendments of the Jews, what security have we of the mind of God as truly represented to us, seeing that it is supposed also that some of the words in the margin were sometimes in the line? And if it be supposed, as it is, that there are innumerable other places of the like nature standing in need of such amendments, what a door would be opened to *curious pragmaticall* wits to overturn all the certainty of the truth of the Scripture, every one may see. Give once this liberty to the audacious curiosity of men priding themselves in their *critical ability*, and we shall quickly find out what woful state and condition the *Truth*

of the Scripture shall be brought unto. . . . But he that pulleth down an hedge, a Serpent shall bite him ! "

These words set before us very clearly that condition of the religious mind which the modern movement of thought has had to meet. The occasion of them, it will be noticed, is not that daring speculation, and not that scientific exposition, with which we have become familiar since ; but simply that textual criticism which is the humblest, but yet a necessary, task of sacred letters, — the modest preliminary task of comparison of copies, and settling minute probabilities among the various readings.* This is a task whose importance depends almost wholly on the theory of verbal inspiration, dear to minds like Owen's; so that, with the dying out of that theory, it comes to be little else than the exercise of a sterile erudition, or perhaps an idle curiosity. Considering the admirable and patient scholarship still spent upon it, there is perhaps no other department of mental industry of which it may be so truly said, that the value of the chase is incomparably more than the value of the game.

The first advances of any note towards a rationalizing treatment of the Bible were made by the English Deists. Their treatment was very crude and ignorant, if we judge it by the standard of our day ; and it was thought, in its own time, to have been suffi-

* Walton's "Polyglott," which called forth Owen's plaintive remonstrance, was published in 1654–57. The chief steps taken in the ensuing century were in Mill's critical edition of the New Testament (1707), Wettstein (1751), and Griesbach (1774–75), whose completed work was published in 1796–1806.

ciently confuted. Common English opinion, as represented by Edmund Burke, looked at it with serene contempt as a thing dead. But on the Continent it was quite otherwise. Voltaire, while in England, had taken an eager interest in whatever looked like a rational and free exercise of thought on religious things. Clarke and Bolingbroke, at the two ends of the scale, were perhaps the names that interested him most; but the whole style of thinking included in the vague term "deistical" had a great effect on his own mind, and, through him, became part of the current opinion among the freethinkers of France, — who, indeed, took it as an impulse to something much more radical. It was also through Voltaire, then the one great literary power on the Continent, that Deism found its way into Germany, and began to engage the attention of the more thoughtful minds there.

Still, the first movements of criticism in Germany were grave and constructive, not revolutionary. They were in the direction, so far, merely of intelligent interpretation; not suspicious, as yet, of any fundamental change in theory. The names which represent this stage of the process are those of Semler and Eichhorn; and of these two we may say that Semler represents a more rationalizing, and Eichhorn a more erudite, manner of discussion. And it is interesting to remark that both took for their point of departure the illustration of the Bible given in the manners and customs of Oriental life. Each aimed at the same thing, — to take the Hebrew race and development from its strange isolation, and introduce it into the wider family of nations. The criticism of

the first was more felt upon the Old Testament; that of the other, upon the New.

The father of modern scientific criticism is held, accordingly, to be Semler, whose investigations on the Canon were published in 1771. His rationalistic temper, singular for that time, was the reaction from a period of morbid and gloomy pietism, in which he would pass whole days with groans and tears, — effectually stanched in the somewhat arid processes of his exposition. His work, it will be noticed, precedes by just ten years the profound movement in the German mind set on foot by the Critical Philosophy of Kant. It was during these ten years that the birth of Criticism, in its modern sense, may be said to have taken place.

But the circumstances of that birth were far more dramatic, and had in them far more of human interest, than the academic lectures of Semler at Halle, or of Kant at Königsberg. That eminent man of letters, Lessing (1729–1781) — who seems to have been scourged by destiny into taking up, one by one, the tasks just then most necessary to the mental unfolding of Germany — was now librarian of that vast and magnificent collection of books which by a sort of caprice had been stored up at Wolfenbüttel. He had been recognized as the one masterly and formidable critic of his time; and the eager diligence in the devouring of books, which he kept up everywhere in a life of painful wandering, made him about equally at home in the matter of debate, in whatever direction it might turn up. The same curious, easy, and minute erudition, from the obscurest sources, which

oozes so copiously through the argument of his "Laocoön," never fails him when he comes to deal with the dry out-of-the-way learning of theology. Let the moving force come upon him from any quarter, and he appears on the instant, fully armed and equipped, to take his share in the battle, and always to give a good deal more than he takes.

It is not likely that this champion of literary debate would have been drawn so deeply into the theological discussions of his time, except as a sort of refuge and healing from that blow which makes the cruellest episode in all literary biography, — the tragic death of his wife and child. It is very characteristic of the man, that — after the one passionate cry, which may be still read as it was "written in a clear firm hand" on the faded leaf in his own library at Wolfenbüttel — the consolation he found was intellectual work in his strongest and best vein, impelled by a generous motive, striking for mental emancipation and religious liberty. For the occasion of this work, it will be necessary to look back a little way.

Early in life, when he had definitely turned his back on theology to seek a career of letters, Lessing had become very intimate with the Jew Mendelssohn, one of the most esteemed philosophers of the day, whose personal traits, of gravity, sweetness, and moral dignity, are thought to be reflected in what is reckoned to be Lessing's masterpiece, "Nathan the Wise." The plan of this noble work, the most famous and effective argument for toleration in all literature, is sketched, in a letter to a friend, a little less than seven months after his wife's death ; and in

the same year almost all his writings of controversial theology were published.

The theological discussions of the time seem to have been running upon quite a low level, whether we take it mentally or morally; and Lessing would hardly have been drawn into them by any sentiment less strong than a passionate and powerful sense of justice. The Lutheran preachers of the day insisted stiffly on the strict construction of the official faith; and, while general thought on higher themes was stagnant, a man of letters might well think that he could do more and better for the world on other lines, though with a secret anger and contempt for the whole field of theological disputation.

It happened that a few years before there had died in Hamburg, while Lessing was living there, a learned Oriental professor, "a great and famous scholar, Hermann Samuel Reimarus." He had adopted, in a very serious and deliberate way, the opinions commonly called deistical, and had written out a careful and elaborate Essay, called "An Apology for Rational Worshippers of God." This was not meant for publication, but to circulate in private as it might be copied out by hand. Lessing, who knew the family intimately, and had (so to speak) consecrated his life to the cause of open debate on everything, eagerly sought, with the help of Mendelssohn, an opportunity to publish the work. For this, however, the time was not ripe, even in the Prussian capital of Frederick the Great. The publisher, indeed, was willing, but the censor weak.

But Lessing's privilege as Librarian included, among

other things, the right to put forth such manuscript treasures of the great Library as he might deem worth publishing. He reckoned it a piece of justifiable craft to add to these treasures the manuscript of Reimarus, and then publish it by instalments as "Anonymous Fragments," with misleading guesses as to their authorship. The earliest appeared in 1774, the others in 1777. Their subjects were, Toleration of Deists; Decrying of Reason in the Pulpit; A Universal Revelation impossible; Passage of the Red Sea; the Old Testament not a Revelation; Narratives of the Resurrection. These were the famous "Wolfenbüttel Fragments." And with their publication the long battle of Reason and Revelation in Germany was fairly begun.

"No one," says Mr. Sime, "could complain that these essays were not sufficiently drastic and plain-spoken. The worst that Voltaire had ever said was equalled, if not surpassed; only, while the force of Voltaire's objections lay in the incisive wit with which they were urged, that of the German scholar lay in the thoroughness of his inquiries and his obvious moral earnestness." * It may be worth while to add that the year when most of these "Fragments" were published was the one year of Lessing's supremely happy married life.

In the controversy which followed, Lessing did not make himself an advocate of the opinions of the

* "Lessing," by James Sime, 2 vols. (Trübner, London), giving a very full and admirable study of Lessing's literary work. The "Life," by Stahr, translated by Professor Evans (2 vols.), leaves nothing to be desired on the biographical side.

Fragmentist. He was attacked sharply for the mischief he was doing in letting them come before the public; and it was on that ground that he made his defence. One point he makes is a little curious. Such discussions as these, it was urged, should be addressed to men of learning and professional theologians only, and in Latin, not in the vulgar tongue. To which he replies — not that the common mind is just what should be interested in such things; but that the Devil, who is on the watch for souls, "would be the gainer, since for the soul of a German clodhopper, who could be seduced only by German writings, he would win the soul of an educated Englishman or Frenchman!" And then, "What of the countries where, as in Poland and Hungary, the common man understands Latin pretty well? Must freethinkers there be compelled to limit themselves to Greek?" So, by mockery and sarcasm as well as by serious argument, he insists on his one point, — the liberty of open and free debate. It is in this connection that his characteristic and most often quoted confession of faith occurs: —

"Not the truth which a man has, or thinks he has, makes his worth; but the honest pains he has taken to come at the truth. For the powers in which alone his increasing perfection lies, expand not through the possession of truth, but the search for it. Possession makes one easy, sluggish, and proud. If God should hold shut up in his right hand all truth, and in his left only the ever-eager effort after truth, though with the condition that I should always and forever err, and should say to me, *Choose!* I would humbly fall at his left hand, and say, Father,

give! pure truth is for Thee alone (*ist ja doch nur für Dich allein*)." *

We have nothing here to do with Lessing's opinions, as such. These, indeed, were still chaotic and unformed upon many points which later study has made tolerably clear. The interest for us is the spirit with which he broke ground in the debate, the mental courage and decision with which he looked out upon the cloudy track that lay close before him. Indeed, he lived barely long enough to enter upon that track, and summon others to follow.

One point — which we may call the point of his fundamental religious faith — he kept steadily in view: his faith, which was like Milton's, that the honest search for truth is a right and safe thing, whatever it leads to. In his own understanding of it, this did not lead him outside the limits of Christianity. When he tries to put it in his own words, it becomes the finest formal definition ever given of what we mean by Divine Providence in the realm of Thought, as found in his little Essay on "the Education of the Human Race," in its opening sentence: "What Education is to the Individual, that Revelation is to Mankind." The illustrations by which he follows up this hint are found in the paragraphs which have been called "Lessing's Hundred Thoughts." † Shrewd, suggestive, eloquent, profound, tender by turns, they express not only his opinions, — many of which were provisional, and are outgrown, — but his deep religious conviction also, the ripe fruit of his long brooding

* From the *Duplik* ("Rejoinder," 1778).

† In Harriet Martineau's "Miscellanies."

upon the lessons of human history, interpreted by the experience of life.

For it was a favorite thought with him, that nothing of the great beliefs which have come to men for strength and comfort in the stress of life — beliefs which he was content to hold as given first, outright, by direct and special communication from God — is contrary to human reason, and that none of them can be lost. What was first a truth of revelation becomes in time a truth of reason. What the mind could not discover, it is fully competent to verify and defend; even to re-discover, as it were, by going back upon its own experience, and following out the laws of thought. That it is so with the moral law, with the one life of humanity, with the Divine Unity, which is oneness of the Universal Life, all men see. So (he thinks) it is, even now, with the belief of immortality, and with the symbol of the Christian trinity; and so — he grasps and strives for some adequate expression, which he seems to find in a sort of metempsychosis — with his faith in a larger religion of Humanity.

Lessing's positive contribution to the literature of biblical criticism was in the form of a "New Hypothesis concerning the Evangelists regarded as merely Human Writers." Of this it has been said that "the fragment we now possess consists only of about twenty pages, yet it is not too much to say that it was the most valuable contribution made to biblical literature in the eighteenth century." The "hypothesis" was the same that was afterwards worked out in detail by Eichhorn, of a "primitive Gospel," or early body of written tradition, from which each of the four Evan-

gelists drew the material which best served his immediate purpose in writing.

An hypothesis is, by intention, a starting-place, not a goal. No one would now maintain this particular theory in the shape it had in Lessing's mind. But it served two uses, indispensable then. It brought the whole matter in debate out of the field of dogma into that of literary criticism; and it led men to think of the Four Gospels no longer as so many fixed irreducible facts, but as phenomena subject to the same laws of genesis and construction that we apply to all other growths of human thought. To appreciate the value of this service, we should remember that it was nearly twenty years earlier than Wolf's famous *Prolegomena* to Homer (1795), which is generally held to be the point of departure of the later, or scientific, criticism.

Incidentally, the work of Lessing did another thing. It limited the field of biblical criticism — or rather, defined the spot on the field where its chief work was to be done — to the story of the Evangelists. This means not only that the battle must be fought about the very inmost sanctuary of traditionary or historic belief; but that all the questions of the so-called higher criticism — philosophic, historical, scientific — are speedily seen to be involved.

To meet such questions as these required a class of minds trained in intellectual methods more profound and independent than those of the eighteenth-century theology. The intellectual revolution signified by the birth of the Critical Philosophy and by the name of Kant was heralded, in the very year of Lessing's

death, by the publication of the "Critique of Pure Reason." We have nothing to do with the schemes of Philosophy, negative or constructive, that have risen since that date. But it is distinctly to be understood that the three best known schools of biblical criticism appearing in the present century are more or less directly the product of the great impulse to speculative thought given by Kant and his successors.

The three schools of biblical criticism just spoken of are known as the Rationalistic school, represented by the name of Paulus; the Mythic school, represented by the name of Strauss; and the Scientific or Historical school, represented by the name of Baur. All the forms of what is sometimes called "German rationalism" or "German infidelity," so far as regards the interpretation of the biblical record, belong with more or less modification to some one of these three recognized schools. These are what we are to try to understand, and we must do this rather in their methods than in their details or their results.

In one point they are all agreed, — which, indeed, may be called a maxim of any scientific method, — that the miraculous, as such, can have no place in the critical interpretation of the facts of history.* In other words, if we are to have any intelligent exposition of those facts, we must treat them exactly as we would the alleged facts of any other narrative, or any other period, which we may have to examine. And then, by the principles universally admitted, it only depends on the strength of our solvent, how many of

* The *rationale* of Miracles is briefly considered in "Our Liberal Movement," pp. 129–142.

them we shall reduce to "the natural order." What cannot be reduced will remain as the foothold of a "supernaturalism" which, in the view of the modern critic, is seen to be only temporary and provisional. Kant's own dictum on this subject is that "Miracles may be admitted in theory, and for the past; but not in practice, and for the present."

The critical method — as implied in these words of Kant — does not, then, directly attack the dogma of supernaturalism. It only, so to speak, displaces it by degrees, as one class of facts after another is seen to yield before the solvent, which it continues to apply in doses of increasing strength. It is from this point of view, not that of outright dogmatic denial of the supernatural, that we have briefly to review the three successive schools of criticism already mentioned. The first, that of Paulus, is generally referred to the impulse given directly by the philosophy of Kant. The second, that of Strauss, is regarded as an application of the method and the principles of Hegel. The third, that of Baur, is to be viewed as the fruit of a more advanced growth of critical learning generally, and in particular of scientific criticism as applied to the interpretation of history.

The methods of Paulus and of Strauss are both what we may call speculative, or dogmatic. Each takes his own principle, or rule of interpretation, and fits the facts of the case to it as he best can. Each applies his own method to the most intricate and difficult form in which the problem can be put, — to the Four Gospels as they stand. These are assumed as

literary data. They are compositions having a defined character, date, and authorship, in which the facts recorded are, for the purposes of the critic, ultimate and fixed facts. Either of these interpretations can subsist only by denial or extinction of the other. And accordingly we find that the most radical and remorseless confutation of the rationalism of Paulus is contained in the introductory argument of Strauss.

They differ in this. To Strauss the supernaturalism which shows everywhere on the face of the New Testament narrative is the play of a free creative imagination, the reflex of traditions, beliefs, religious ideals, and national hopes. It is, in short, to be read as a strain of pure poetry. To Paulus the same narrative of facts is to be read as the most literal, natural, and simple prose.

The mind of Paulus was prepared to take this view not only by the school of philosophy in which he had been trained, but by the circumstances of his own home life. His father — a worthy and somewhat sentimental, while very orthodox, religionist — was broken in mind and heart by the death of his wife when his boy was only six years old. He began, within no long time, to be comforted by visions in which she was brought back to him, and they held discourse together familiarly as of old. These visions presently became part of his religious faith, no doubt the most lively and genuine part of it; and he gave great scandal by insisting on his private revelations, and even printing books about them, till in the judgment of his religious fellows he was held to be insane.

As often happens in the immediate family of those

whose religion runs to such visions and visitations, his son was made only the more sceptical and the more rationalizing in temper the more the visions multiplied. He, too, was a preacher, acceptable and devout; and with him too, as with Kant, the real significance of religion was not in "visions and revelations of the Lord" (of which the Apostle Paul speaks a little doubtfully), but in the plain and perhaps rather dry moralities of human life. He did not go very deep into the criticism of the Gospel text. He rather took it as it stood without demur, and held himself to be an honest and straightforward interpreter of its meaning. Anxiously, and apparently with perfect honesty, he sets himself to the task of expounding the narrative, verse by verse, phrase by phrase, patiently and ingeniously faithful to explain away all that can affront the sober reason.

He does not charge the wonders to any dishonesty in those who told them; only to credulity in those who believed there was any miracle in them. Miracle is to be admitted only in the last resort, — like the proof of guilt in a criminal court. It is not only perfectly legitimate, it is a clear duty, to try every other explanation first. The principle is quite simple and clear: the applications of it are always ingenious, often plausible. They are given in little dissertations, which are sometimes masterpieces of skill.*

In many cases, the result is what we might easily

* Particularly the detailed exposition of the raising of Lazarus, which, as well as the case of the young man at Nain, is treated as a rescue from the horrors of premature burial: for to bring back a departed spirit to this life of pain (he says) would be sheer cruelty.

anticipate; and, as we might also expect, the poetic beauty and tenderness have vanished in the exposition. Thus the Shepherds were well acquainted at the "inn" or hostelry where the child's birth was hourly looked for, and what they took for angels were flickerings in the sky. The Wise Men heard of the event, quite accidentally, at Jerusalem, most likely through Anna the prophetess. The Temptation is "a dreamlike vision." The Transfiguration is a secret conference with certain confidential messengers, who disappear just at the sudden glow of sunrise. The feeding of the Five Thousand is a generous love-feast: those crowds journeying to some great festival always took abundance of food with them. The penny is never even said to have been found in the fish's mouth: it was evidently the market-price it sold for. Jesus did not walk *on* the sea, but *by* the sea: the common understanding of it would make a miracle turn on a preposition (*philologisches Mirakel*). The daughter of Jairus was "not dead but sleeping," as Jesus said she was. All the stories of the Resurrection are elaborately harmonized and explained, in view of the supposition that Jesus himself revived from the apparent death of swooning and exhaustion, and himself pushed back the stone from the mouth of the sepulchre; and for the Ascension we have a scene in which he is at last tenderly led away, to be cared for by near friends.

In all this, Paulus means no offence to religious feeling. On the contrary, he is profuse, and manifestly quite sincere, in urging the divine — at least the paramount — claims of Jesus himself, and the

good faith of the Gospel narrative. To him this is the natural and sensible interpretation of the facts. It is also their religious interpretation. A great stumbling-block (he thinks) is taken out of the way of true Christianity if other men will only consent to see these things as he does.

While the theological world was wrangling over this plain-spoken rendering, and the question seemed to be, how far reason could be allowed to take a hand in the discussion, if at all, suddenly a new challenge was thrown down by "a young doctor, hot and glowing from the forge," as Luther once described himself. That challenge was Strauss's "Life of Jesus." The tone of this was curiously confident, even haughty and disdainful. It asked and gave no terms whatever as to either party in the debate. The supernaturalist it treated with brief contempt; the rationalist it refuted with perhaps superfluous labor.

Strauss was the disciple and champion of a philosophy no longer merely critical, but constructive and dogmatic. The school of Hegel claimed to find in their method a universal solvent for all matters of fact or dogma. Everything was to be taken in the terms of the new metaphysics. Everything was to be regarded as only a step in the process of evolution of the Absolute, and to be interpreted as the symbol of an Idea. All opinions were true, so far forth as they were held as "presentation" (*Vorstellung*) of the incomprehensible, or at least uncomprehended, spiritual fact; all were false which pretended to be more than that.

The doctrines of the Orthodox creed, the facts of

the Gospel legend were all true ; only they must be taken in a transcendental sense. The Incarnation, Resurrection, Ascension, Atonement, Immortal Life, state to our thought the poetic symbol under which we are to apprehend the intellectual conditions and laws of human life, or the eternal unfolding of the Absolute Idea. The Idea survives, though the symbol has passed away. The ghost remains, when the body of doctrine is long dead. And we had best continue to call the ghost by the old familiar name.

In the sphere of history, — notably in a history purely religious and symbolic, like that of the Gospels, — we are not, according to Strauss, dealing with anything so gross as facts, to be either accepted or denied in their carnal sense. We are dealing with that halo of poetry, fable, or "myth" — that is, the narrative embodiment of an ideal or moral truth — which Christian fancy, working at a time that was creative and revolutionary, not critical, had caught from Jewish dreams, and woven about the substance — meagre and all but forgotten — of the historical life of Jesus.

The entire, even disdainful, confidence with which this view was put forth, as well as the singular wealth and facility of learning in the exposition, made in the face of gray pedantry by a theologian of twenty-seven, had much to do with the fact that Strauss was spokesman of a dogmatic school of philosophy, in the flush of its early intellectual triumph ; and that his work was even less an original essay than it was the application of a ready-made order of ideas to a subject which had been beaten thoroughly into shape

under the blows of a half-century of debate. The *Leben Jesu* was called "an epoch-making book." It was so, especially, in the sense that it lifted the whole subject of discussion off the plane of wrangling literalism, where it had been lying, and dealt with it on the higher levels of abstract philosophy.

Of course, the argument was misunderstood. The word "myth," which signifies an unconscious poetry, was popularly thought to mean a wilful lie; and, where it was rightly understood, it naturally roused only the deeper repugnance. To the earlier belief the marvels of the Testament were both poetry and fact. Spare them as fact, and even if you put a low interpretation upon them, still you have something left, — the nucleus, possibly, of what will at least have a moral value, out of which a religious meaning may grow at length. But dissolve them into poetry and myth; make them mere "presentations" of an idea; turn them, in other words, into mere illustrations of the laws of human thought, having neither historic reality nor moral significance, — and, truly, Christianity itself has passed away in a dissolving view. This notion, more or less obscurely conceived, embittered the animosity of attack; and it seems to be reflected in the gloom of Strauss's later "Retrospect," as well as in his haughty withdrawal from the better sympathies of his own age.

It will be noticed that both the methods just described agree in attacking the critical problem in its most intricate and difficult forms. Each, naturally, solves it by a certain off-hand dogmatism, which admits no compromise or reconciliation. On such terms

as these the debate might go on forever, without positive result. One other way remains, which we may call the scientific or historical; and of this the essential thing will be to approach the same problem indirectly, by aid of premises and inductions obtained in some other quarter. This is the method represented by the eminent name of Ferdinand Christian Baur.

The starting-point consists in the definite conception of Christianity as an historical religion, — a development, in the field of history, of certain religious, moral, or speculative ideas. The first decisive step will be taken, when we seize some one moment of this development, in which we can get the facts at first-hand, and trace the conditions intelligently.

Such a moment — the earliest we can get — is at the date of the first Christian writings of undisputed genuineness. And it was what we may call the Columbus's egg of criticism, — the sudden practical solution of a problem that had seemed insoluble, by a process so simple that it seemed impossible it should not have been tried before, — when Baur transferred the discussion from the obscure and disputed ground of the Evangelists to the acknowledged writings of the Apostle Paul. Whatever else may be in doubt, at all events the argument of Galatians, Corinthians, and Romans was addressed to the Christian mind not long after the middle of the first century; and these writings certainly reflect the beliefs, the disputes, the intellectual conditions of the Christian community at that time.

It is unnecessary to follow here, in any detail, the inferences and discussions that ensued, developed

with an industry, ability, and massive learning, which soon gave a marked and preponderant weight to the "Tübingen School" of critics. One or two characteristic features, or tendencies, in this school come by right within the briefest historical review.

What first attracts our notice in these writings of Paul, especially the earliest, is the collision between what we have learned to call the "Petrine" and the "Pauline" interpretation of Christianity,—one making it a Jewish sect; the other aiming at a universal, or at any rate an independent, religion. We have, then, at the outset, a conflict of ideas,—which, in fact, we follow easily down to their reconciliation, past the middle of the second century. This conflict, as we may assume, gives us a clew to the motive and spirit of all the Christian writings of that period; and it especially throws light, in a very instructive way, upon the composition of the several Evangelists, and of the Book of Acts.

In particular, by studying the conditions of this conflict, we are very much helped in fixing approximately the dates of the several compositions,—a fundamental and essential thing in the understanding of the earlier Christian history. For example, the historical method may be almost said to supersede that of literary criticism, in making it certain that the Fourth Gospel was not the work of the Apostle John, but belongs to a time when Greek speculation was fully naturalized in the Christian body,—in a word, almost certainly, after the final destruction of the Jewish people in A. D. 135.* Earlier dates are

* The lack of historical sense and the purely speculative motive

fixed with less precision; but the tentative or provisional assignment, which this theory makes probable, gives the highest interest and value to the study of the first movements of Christian thought. Without committing ourselves to the result, we shall at least acknowledge the inestimable service of the method.

The literary problem of the Gospels is thus approached indirectly. The positions occupied are not forced: they are such as fall of themselves before the advance of constructive criticism. Properly speaking, this does not aim to establish a foregone conclusion; only to ascertain, as nearly as may be, the fact of the case as the mist slowly passes off. The old question of natural and supernatural is not even raised, any more than it is in studying the antiquities of Rome or the geological strata of the globe. All that is wanted is a groundwork, however slender, of ascertained fact. There is absolutely no reason why the most rigid supernaturalist should not take the full benefit of this method, as far as it will go, without disturbing his previous opinions in the least, — unless they should happen to give way before the different mental habit that will have been slowly growing up. No room is left for that particular line of controversy.

But every method has its own weakness, as well as its own strength. Perhaps the most fruitful idea ever introduced into this field of discussion was that of the

in Strauss, on the contrary, are seen in his admission of the probable authorship of John in the third edition of the *Leben Jesu*, and his retraction of it in the fourth.

early conflict of Petrine and Pauline Christianity, cropping out here and there, more or less consciously, all over the ground of investigation. The fault would appear to have been in forcing it, unnecessarily, into every detail. Surely, a very large part of the early Christian writings are as far as possible from being controversial. They are practical, sentimental, sympathetic, pious, ethical. They have always been used for edification, not dispute. They are, to the common eye at least, quite innocently unconscious of any polemic motive (*Tendenz*), such as this theory constantly aims to force upon them. It is likely, even, that far the largest part of the Christian thought was bestowed upon, and that far the largest part of the Christian writings reflect, no such controversies whatever as are here assumed, but were occupied with quite a different set of interests and conflicts; so that they suffer great distortion through the powerful refracting lens of scientific criticism, as it has been employed. The vital is constantly, and quite wrongly, overlaid by the polemic. The great service of this school of critics lay in conquering the field. Its reduction and tillage are likely to find something for other hands to do.

The admirable and most fruitful results of this method, applied in the kindred province of Old Testament criticism, by the so-called "Dutch School," I have detailed before.* It only remains to hint at the chief lack which has still to be supplied.

So far, the subject of Biblical Criticism has been kept almost wholly within pretty sharply marked and

* See Hebrew Men and Times, Introd. pp. xx.–xxiv.

well understood boundaries. It has made a province of erudition by itself, — too far apart from contact and comparison with other provinces. Christianity as an historical religion, particularly in its origin and first development, was powerfully stamped by the genius, temper, and traditions of a very peculiar people. For a really scientific study of it, we should need comparison with the genius, temper, and traditions of many other peoples. This was not possible while that one field was marked off, as "sacred learning," for professional theologians. And the habit of regarding themselves as somehow confined within its boundaries has been kept up, quite needlessly, by the more independent scholars and critics who have had their training as professional theologians.

In short, it still remains to make Biblical Criticism a recognized thing in the cosmopolitan realm of learning. Such scholars as Max Müller and Ernest Renan, — not primarily theologians, but one of them a philologist, and the other a man of letters, — will have more weight with the next generation of Christian students than Paulus or Strauss or Baur or Ewald or Kuenen.

Hitherto, again, the interest taken in the comparative study of Religions has been mostly speculative, — a comparison of ideas; of manners, perhaps; possibly, of men. What is further needed is to find a real ground of comparison in the origin of historical religions; the facts and conditions of their genesis, growth, and transformations; the development, in short, of the great Faiths of Humanity, studied with a purely scientific motive, from an historical or psycho-

logical point of view. No phenomenon can be rightly understood, if studied separate and alone. The problem of the rise of Christianity is to be regarded, then, not as a thing apart, but as one illustration — certainly the most signal and impressive illustration — of a very wide range of fact and law.

Nor would this be so far to seek, if scientific critics would only open their eyes to what is directly about them, instead of looking through a narrow tube at phenomena more than eighteen hundred years away. Quite within my own recollection, all the conditions have been found for the rise of an historical religion in at least four cases, and I know not how many more: that of the Mormons and Spiritists in America, the Bâb in Persia, and the Brahmo Somaj in India; to say nothing of Comte's "Religion of Humanity," or the revolutionary faith of Socialism. Probably all of these will soon be crushed out (if they have not been already) by special circumstances, or else absorbed in wider faiths. But under other circumstances either of them might well grow to be historically as interesting, if not so important, as Parsism, Buddhism, or Islam.*

Nor do they lack their accompaniment of marvel. Mormonism has its clumsy legend, which is an article of faith with myriads; and in the circles of Spiritism many of us have witnessed phenomena which two or three centuries ago we should not have hesitated to

* The "Spectator" of March 17, 1883, mentions an official report "that a tribe in Orissa has adopted Queen Victoria as its deity;" and adds, that "there is absolutely no impossibility in its spread, and if it spread, the consequences would be incalculable."

ascribe to miracle or to inspired prophecy. All these, scientifically studied, would make historical parallels of approach to the investigation of the first Christian age.

Most of the controversies that have risen about the Origin of Christianity, considered as an isolated phenomenon, are already sterile. They repel instead of attracting many of the ablest and most highly cultivated minds of our time. But, if the superhuman interest fails, at least the human interest remains. The circumstances under which a great and victorious faith was born into the world, — a faith which shaped the civilization and trained the best thought of mankind for more than a thousand years; a faith which, in all manner of disguises, is as alive to-day as ever, — cannot possibly lack interest to any one who is capable of taking an intellectual interest in anything.

To restore that interest, if it be possible, and to make it of service in a nobler way than merely to gratify a barren curiosity, or yield material to scholastic pedantry, or furnish fresh weapons to polemic rancor, is the proper task of that which may still call itself the higher Christian scholarship. A needful preparation for this broader task is found in the work done by those schools of Biblical Criticism which we have briefly reviewed. They were the necessary outgrowth of speculative philosophy, in the attitude it has held in the last hundred years; and their preliminary work has been required, in order that Religion — free from technical and unscientific limitations — may find its right place in the world of modern thought.

X.

SPECULATIVE THEOLOGY.

A CENTURY and a half of destructive analysis had begun with Descartes and ended with Kant; and this had involved, as side-issues, those movements of radical criticism which we have seen in England, France, and Germany. The authority of Church and the authority of Creed had both been thoroughly undermined. To preserve the structure built upon them might still seem possible if, before it quite collapsed, a new foundation could be substituted for the old, by one of those ingenious processes known to our modern engineering: in short, a *transsubstantiation* of the creed.

That structure — the visible fabric of Christian theology — includes two things: a system of Belief, or speculative dogma; and a system of Morals, or practical ethics. In real life, the two are found closely bound together; so that where belief was most completely shattered, as in France, the decay of morality was also most profound.* And, in proportion to its sincerity, men's belief has always been asserted to be inseparably bound up with the interests of general morality.

Still, in theory at least, the two are quite distin-

* That Germany was not at all events far behind, see Biedermann, *Deutschland im achtzehnten Jahrhundert*, vol. ii. p. 28.

guishable; and, while they may be threatened by the same danger, they will defend themselves in very different ways. The speculative dogma will seek to fortify itself by some constructive system of philosophy; the practical ethics will seek to establish itself on a scientific base. In the era of reconstruction which follows the crisis of a revolution, we shall therefore find — looking from the religious point of view — a movement of speculative theology, attended or followed by an effort to find in positive science a practical guide of life. These two will, accordingly, make the closing topics in the historical survey which is here attempted.

But, before dealing directly with the former, — the problems or the systems of speculative theology, — it is well to glance for an instant at those signs of the times which show that the first half of the nineteenth century was a period of vigorous ecclesiastical revival. In fact, the brilliant and imposing systems of religious philosophy, which to many have seemed to give a new life to the old creeds of Christendom, are only symptoms, among many others, of the powerful reaction that set in after the great storms of the revolutionary era. In Politics we find, as a chief symptom, the Holy Alliance; in Letters, the conservative swing shown so strikingly by Wordsworth in England, by Chateaubriand in France, and by the Schlegels in Germany; in Art, the sudden effulgence and predominance of Romanticism. This reactionary drift may be said, in a general way, to be as distinctly characteristic of the first half of the century as it has yielded suddenly since, before the new invasions of

the scientific spirit. Its most marked and interesting exhibitions, however, have been within strictly ecclesiastical lines, at what we may call the two poles of the sacerdotal sphere: in the Ultramontanism of Rome, and in the Tractarianism of Oxford.

The conservative instinct of the hierarchy, which found itself threatened in the Revolution with such a deadly blow, naturally took refuge in a Centralism that made Rome more and more the one seat of authority, till it culminated in 1870 by forcing the dogma of Papal Infallibility upon the reluctant assent of Catholic Christendom. The political symptoms of it are found in the Concordat of 1801, reinforced after the fall of Napoleon; the formal league between the Church and Absolutism in the Holy Alliance (1815); the restoring of the Jesuits at the same date, with the renewed activity of the Inquisition and the Propaganda; the bitterly repressive policy of Gregory XVI. (1831–1846), with his declaration of hostility against natural science and popular liberty; the long papacy of Pius IX. (1846–1878), including the suppression of his own liberal leanings under Jesuit control; the famous Syllabus of Errors, which denounced the whole spirit of modern civilization and intelligence; and the crowning dogma of Infallibility (1870), which was instantly followed by the abolition of the Temporal Power.

This last event, while a great seeming defeat of the Papacy, brings into clearer relief the measures by which the Church of Rome has sought to confirm itself as a spiritual power. This has been, especially, by making its appeal more and more to emotional

piety, and confirming its hold on the ignorant and sentimental as a religion of the imagination and the heart. Symptoms of this are found, on one side, in a great revival of ecclesiastical and romantic Art under the auspices of the Church; and, on another side, in the renewal by Leo XII. (1823–1829) of the "worship of the Sacred Heart;" in miracles such as that of Lourdes, and pilgrimages such as that of the Holy Coat at Trèves; in emotional and impassioned preaching, such as that of Lacordaire at Paris.* These things do not make our subject; and I only speak of them, in passing, to reinforce the thought that we are dealing with a period of ecclesiastical reaction, not merely with a phase of speculation which we might treat as if it were accidental and alone.

The Oxford movement would give us, biographically considered, one of the most tempting of themes. Such a noble vindication of its motive as we find in Newman's *Apologia*, such a personal record as that of Keble, such curious side-glimpses as come to us in Mozley's "Reminiscences," above all the clear and vigorous exhibitions of it given by Mr. Froude,† might charm us to linger on the road with them. But it would be taking us, after all, out of the path of our argument. Tractarianism is only an episode, even in the ecclesiastical life of England. What was most logical and vigorous in it went at length to Rome; and the whole of its fascinating story illustrates much better a mood of mind requiring to be met,

* This subject is very fully treated by Laurent: *Le Catholicisme et la Religion de l'Avenir* (2 vols. Paris).

† Short Studies, Fourth Series.

than it does any well-considered and skilful way of meeting it.

The special movement of thought in which we are now interested may be said to date back as far as the vehement and rather febrile protest of Rousseau against the materialism of his own day. For it happened that in 1761 Frederic Henry Jacobi, then a youth of eighteen, was living in Geneva as a business clerk, and that here he was powerfully influenced by Rousseau's writings, particularly "Émile" and the "Savoyard Vicar." Personally he was repelled from Rousseau by the "Confessions," and came under quite a different influence;* but he kept a great esteem for what he regarded as the finest genius of France, and owed to that example his "leap" (*Sprung*) from materialism to the condition of mind which takes spiritual realities for granted. "You see," said he to a friend, in his old age, "I am still the same; a pagan in my understanding, but a Christian to the bottom of my heart."

Jacobi (1743–1819) is generally recognized as the earliest witness, or interpreter, of that powerful movement of religious thought in Germany, which is still one of the most vital intellectual forces of the day. In particular, his name is held to stand for the opinion that spiritual things are "perceived" by an interior or transcendental sense, — as precisely and

* In particular, Jacobi came under the powerful influence of Bonnet, a Genevan preacher, who seems to have been the recognized head of an emotional religious movement, and author of certain pious meditations upon Nature, which the young Jacobi "knew almost by heart." See Hettner's History of German Literature, vol. iii. pp. 316–324.

legitimately as, for example, visible things are perceived by the eye. If he did put his doctrine in that form, it must have been, apparently, by way not of dogma but of illustration. At twenty-one he had "plunged into Spinoza," and he is considered to have done the German mind the service of reviving the memory of the great Pantheist. But he is far from being satisfied with that line of thought. "Speculation alone," he says, "attains only to [the idea of] Substance, — a blank Necessity." "What I need," he says again, "is not a truth which should be of my making, but that of which I myself should be the creature." *

Far from the logical consistency which most Germans affect in their religious philosophy, Jacobi is very impatient of method. All logic, he holds, leads to fatalism; and to each of the great speculative schools of his day he finds himself equally opposed. "All philosophy," he says, "built upon thought that can be clearly stated to the intellect (*begriffsmässig*) gives for bread a stone, for God's living personality the mechanism of Nature, for free-will a rigid Necessity." "In proceeding from Nature we find no God: God is first, or not at all." "We know the truth not [according to Kant] by reason, but by faith, feeling, instinct," — for he employs all these terms to convey his meaning. "Words, dear Jacobi, words," said the cool critic Lessing.

It is the first step that costs. This "first step," Jacobi seems never to have been able to make clear to his own mind, much less to other minds. It is,

* Biedermann, vol. iv. p. 850.

after all, a "leap," — a feat impossible to logic, and good only in fact to him who is already on the other side of the logical gulf. At least, it is a reality he is striving for, not a figment of the brain: he "would fain keep the pearl, while materialist and idealist divide the shell between them." His thought is true in this: that religion is, as he says, a matter not of theory but of life; known not by inference from some other thing, but as a primary fact of experience; "given in our own free act and deed." Perhaps his best statement of the thought is that "Reason, as distinct from sense, perceives not only objects that are good, beautiful, and true, but that which is primarily or ideally good, beautiful, and true;" and "because one sees this face, he knows that a spirit lives in him and a Spirit above him." Again, let us do Jacobi the justice of hearing him in his own words: —

"As religion makes a man *a man*, and as that alone lifts him above the brutes, so too it makes him a philosopher. As piety strives by devout purpose to fulfil the will of God, so religious insight seeks to know or understand the unknown (*Verborgene*). It was the aim of my philosophy to deal with this religion, the centre of all spiritual life; not the acquisition of further scientific knowledge, which may be had without philosophy. Communion with Nature should help me to communion with God. To rest in Nature, and learn to do without God, and to forget him in it, I would not."

"I have been young and now am old; and I bear witness that I have never found thorough, pervading, enduring virtue with any but such as feared God, — not in the modern, but in the old childlike, way. And only

with such, too, have I found joy in life, — a hearty, victorious gladness, of so distinct a kind that no other is to be compared with it."

"Light is in my heart; but as soon as I would bring it into my understanding, it goes out. Which of these two lights is true, — that of the understanding, which indeed shows clearly-defined forms, but back of them a bottomless abyss; or that of the inward glow, which gives promise of outward light, but lacks clear intelligence? Can the soul of man win truth, except by combination of the two? And is that combination conceivable, unless by miracle?"

We are already on the high road to mysticism. But Jacobi, we should bear in mind, was not a philosopher trained in the methods of the Schools. He was educated (as we have seen) to business life; and only by strong bent of genius became a man of thought and a man of letters. Naturally, his illogical methods scandalized the university men, those aristocrats and monopolists of learning. "This reckless fashion," says Kant, "of rejecting all formal thought as pedantry betrays a secret purpose, under the guise of philosophy, of turning in fact all philosophy out of doors!"

In short, the real aim of Jacobi was — as he very frankly says himself — not to give a logical and coherent philosophy of religion. This, he was firmly convinced, was to belie its very nature, — as Kant himself seems to grant, when he puts it in the field of practical and not of speculative reason. What he would do is to register a fact of psychology, not a process of logic. The "act of faith," as we call it, by

which the mind plants itself on truth of the spiritual order, is in fact, as he states it, a "leap" — into the dark.* The psychology is precisely the same as Luther's: "*Believe* that you are a child of God, and in that act you are his child."

No process of demonstration, it is likely, ever convinced anybody of what we must take to be the primary data of the religious life. Belief — in the sense in which religionists use the word — is not an intellectual process: it is a vital one. A man shall listen half a lifetime to the most faultless argument in proof of some system of doctrine. He accepts the premises, he assents to the conclusions, perhaps; but he remains at heart a doubter. Some day a thought strikes him suddenly, and shows things in another light. Or he goes into a conventicle, or is surprised by a sudden peril, or some unexpected word of sympathy melts him; and from that hour he BELIEVES. Not only the one point that is touched, but all the latent creed in him becomes luminous in the glow of that emotion; as when an electric spark leaps from point to point, making a device or a picture of vivid light. It has suddenly become TRUE to him, and he implicitly accepts it all. Without a particle of new

* This "leap" is often (perhaps oftenest) connected, in religious experience, with what theologians call *conviction of sin*, — that is, the powerful wakening of moral consciousness in the form of an interior conflict, as distinct from simple moral judgment of things good as opposed to evil. Compare the testimony of Paul and of Augustine, "Early Christianity," pp. 44, 133, 137. The "feeling of dependence," on which Schleiermacher and others stake it, is both feebler in itself, and likely to lead rather to a sentimental quietism. The true foundation of religious conviction is moral, rather than speculative or emotional. (See above pp. 10, 14.)

evidence, he believes in the popular vision of heaven and hell, which was a horrid dream to him before; in the Trinity and Atonement, which till now were downright falsehood to him; in the absolute authority of Bible or Creed, which he had held to be the height of unreason. All at once these things have become vivid and intense realities to his mind. As an intellectual process it is worthless. As a vital one, it may carry with it the most far-reaching consequences, and be, what it is generally called, the regeneration of the man.

All this is the every-day experience of what is technically known as "conversion." It takes place not only on the lower levels of intelligence or culture, as we might be apt to think; but in a mind of force, gravity, and breadth, like that of Chalmers; in a mind brilliant, social, worldly, like that of Wilberforce. These deep springs of life are not touched by a logical process. That, in general, only trims and pares down the spontaneous growth. The chance always is that it will cut so deep to the quick, as to maim the life. It is by sympathy, by reverence, by the kindling of affection, that men believe. Then their faith, like a flame, seizes and appropriates such material as lies nearest at hand.

We may easily conceive this faith, in great intensity, combined with very simple elements of intellectual belief. The mere emotion of piety, however, will hardly subsist without something in the mind to feed on. Some intellectual element appears to be involved in the experience itself; some article of faith, implicitly if not explicitly held. What this is,

in the most simple and fundamental form, we find asserted and (if so may be) legitimated in Jacobi's philosophy of religion. Of this we have now two things to observe.

In the first place, it includes two things quite distinct from each other, — the psychological fact and the logical inference. The fact of experience is undeniable; but what can it be said to prove? Evidently, not all the beliefs associated with it in the believer's mind: not the Scotch Calvinism of Chalmers; not the evangelical creed of Wilberforce. The interior vision, which is asserted to behold eternal realities, views them (as Paul says) "in a mirror." That mirror cannot possibly be anything else than the mind of the beholder. What he sees is, primarily, his own thought. The Object seen is simply the reflection of the Subject which sees.* "God," said Fontenelle, "made man in his own image; but then, man does the same by Him." In the language of the Psalmist, God shows himself to the merciful as merciful, to the upright as righteous, to the pure as pure, to the violent as wrathful. Probably no case of such interior perception on record is more vivid and genuine than Loyola's vision of the Trinity, or the disordered fancy that both saw and handled the Sacred Heart. Yet we do not hold such things as testimony of any fact beyond the mental condition of those to whom they were the most convincing of realities.

In the second place, not only the experience can

* The reader will recall that Speculation is derived from *Speculum*, which means "a mirror." (Compare p. 305, below.)

be no evidence to any other than the believer himself: it is not, strictly speaking, evidence to him. It is rather a state of mind which feels no need of evidence. Very likely the believer will allege it, to prove or confirm in other minds the thing of which he is fully assured in his own. But, after all, he can only assert the fact that *so he thinks.* The moment we bring it to the test of comparing the objects of faith in different minds, of equal vigor and perspicacity, we find that the objective validity disappears. At most we can say this: that a very vivid and intense conviction, in a gifted mind, has an incalculable power of creating the like conviction in other minds,— like induced electricity, or the magnetizing of a needle; and that all the great historic faiths of mankind have in fact had this origin. And it is not difficult, once assuming a profound and vital experience in such a mind, to see how what was vision there becomes faith, then symbol, then creed, as it passes down through other minds. In the first it was a primary fact of consciousness, which had no need of proof. In the others it becomes an article of belief, resting either on the authority of the first, or else on a mood of experience which has in like manner kindled the emotion of the believer to a radiant heat.

Now it is interesting to observe, in this whole chapter of religious history which we are reading, that systematic dogma is absolutely lost sight of, while the single aim is to vindicate the experience itself of the religious life. We are far as yet from any new structure, however spectral, of a speculative

theology. The ground is only getting ready. It is, as yet, only a single step out of blank materialism. The next step in that direction was taken by a man widely different in mental outfit, training, and way of life from Jacobi, whose testimony is, however, fundamentally the same.

All the profounder schools of religious thought in this century date, it is said, from Schleiermacher (1768–1834). The great impulse received from him was at the very dawn of the century, in his "Discourses" (*Reden*, 1799) and "Monologues" (1800), both composed in the very crisis of reaction from materialism and revolutionary violence. With him, too, religion is no system of dogma, but an ultimate fact of experience. Nay, he seems not even to appeal to it as evidence of any fact or opinion except such as is contained in the experience itself. "Religion," he says, "was the mother's bosom, in whose sacred warmth and darkness my young life was fed and prepared for the world which lay before me all unknown; and she still remained with me, when God and immortality vanished before my doubting eyes." And even in his later career it remained, to many, "quite uncertain whether Schleiermacher believed or not in revelation, miracle, the divinity of Christ, the trinity, the personality of God, or the immortality of the soul. In his theological phrases, he would avoid all that could distinctly mean this or that."

All this, we notice with some surprise, is said of a man who is confessedly a great religious leader, and of that period in his life when his influence is most powerfully felt in the revival of religious faith. He

addresses his argument to "the educated despisers of religion;" and we involuntarily contrast it with the way a similar phase of unbelief was met two generations earlier by Butler, who thinks it essential to begin by showing the probability of a future life and its penal judgments, in the hardest form of positive dogma. Religious thought in England had kept "the terror of the Lord" quite visible in the background of argument. Here, on the contrary, we deal only with the primary fact of an experience having its root in "a feeling of dependence." Christianity itself is defined as "pure conviction," quite apart from any historic testimony. We are asked to believe only this: that the emotional experience itself is genuine and vital.

If now we compare Schleiermacher with Jacobi, we shall find in him less of the busy and restless intelligence, aiming to legitimate his thought in a clear and coherent statement; more of the vehement and impassioned utterance of the experience itself; more of the ardent appeal to kindred feeling in other minds. Here, too, we find in the doctrine an outgrowth of what was most intensely personal in the life. The father of Schleiermacher was a good old-fashioned Calvinistic preacher, chaplain to a regiment; and, for convenience in some of his wanderings, he put the boy at school among the Moravian Brethren. These made the most pious of religious communities. In spiritual descent their tradition came down from Bohemian exiles, who carried into their retreat the same religious ardor that had flamed with such obstinate fury in the Hussite wars; but in

them, or in their followers, it was tempered to a sweet, somewhat austere, and most nobly self-sacrificing piety. It was the placid faith of a group of Moravian missionaries in a storm at sea, that had touched John Wesley more profoundly than ever before with the reality and power of a religious life. And this obscure community was the "mother's bosom, warm and dark," which nourished the germs of that young life given to its charge.

The boy proved a boy of genius, of splendid, capacious, and indefatigable intelligence, who soon outgrew his masters. By his father's consent he was duly transferred to a German university; and here, against his father's vehement remonstrance, he made a deliberate study of the objections which free-thinkers had urged against the Christian faith. "I have been over all that ground myself," his father writes, "and know how hard it is to win back the peace you are so ready to throw away. Faith is the immediate gift of God: go to Him for it on your knees, and do not tempt him by making light of that gift." He bids his son study Lessing, especially "The Education of the Human Race;" and is sure, if he has intellectual difficulties, he will find them answered there.

But books speak one thing to the grave, experienced man, who reads the running comment of his own life between the lines; quite another thing to the eager student, who has eyes and ears only for what meets the present demand of his impatient spirit. He will know all that can be said in doubt or denial of the faith he is so sure of. At least, the

one miracle of redemption (*Erlösung*), which he is conscious of in his own soul, — there can be no doubting or denying that! Still, he seems to have misreckoned his strength of mind; and he confesses to his father a sort of despair, in seeing so much give way that was built in with his faith, which there is little prospect that he can ever win back. His father can only answer, as before, that faith is the immediate gift of God, and must be had again on the same old terms, — none other.

This experience, in which everything external had been cut down to the quick, happening to him on the verge of manhood, was what prepared the way for that singular and unalterable religious confidence which runs through all the phases of his later mental life. These we see, most intelligibly, in his autobiographic Letters; for by temperament he eagerly craved sympathy, and his correspondence is all translucent to the light that beams steadily at the centre. There is something sensitive, emotional, feminine, in his style of piety. We find it too sentimental. We miss a certain manliness in the tone. Especially we are surprised to find so free a thinker — one who has perhaps done more than any other man to dissolve away the shell of dogma from the religious life — so keenly sensitive to external rites and ecclesiastical symbolism. We have followed him, it may be, through the widest ranges of Pagan and Christian speculation, into regions where the creed and the very name of Christianity seem sublimated to a viewless ether; yet his last act is to call for cup and platter, to administer the eucharist, feebly, with

dying hands and lips, and even then to justify himself against the imaginary charge that he has neglected some lesser formularies of the evangelical Church.

In reading a biography which exhibits so much more the sentiment of the religious life than the dignity and massiveness of character we might have looked for, we must still bear in mind, to do him justice, the great wealth of his scholarly attainment, and the vast intellectual service he has rendered to his generation. His translating and expounding of Plato is reckoned one of the great exploits of German learning; his works are a considerable library of professional and historic lore; and his volumes of systematic theology, in particular, are the fountain-head of much of the "liberal orthodoxy" of our day. For our present subject, there are two points of view, from which we have to regard his work.

The first is the genuine, unquestionable, and powerful impulse which he gave to the educated mind of Germany by his earlier "Discourses." These were not delivered as Addresses, but were printed and circulated as Essays. It is not easy to describe or account for the effect they are said to have had on the general mind. One is inclined to ascribe this effect less to anything they say than to their way of saying it. Not in respect of literary style, for to our mind at least that is vague and long-drawn, as is the manner of most German prose. Nor is it vividness and force of diction, which, with rare exceptions, we hardly find in them. But, more than almost any writings of their class, they give the rush of abrupt

and unpremeditated discourse, a frank boldness of appeal, a torrent of impetuous conviction, a passion and glow of moral earnestness, which transfigure and irradiate the dull forms of speech, and fully explain the emotion with which they were received. It is as if the young man — now thirty-one — had sprung by an uncontrollable impulse to some spot by the wayside, where his eager speech, his impassioned gesture, his prophetic glow, suddenly arrest the idle crowd, and he is felt to speak "as one having authority." It is but a single thing he has to say. He has only to add his word of testimony to the reality of the religious life; to urge that testimony in face of the events that make the time grave; to show what is the one thing needful in the intellectual life of Germany at such a time. And in doing this he has, perhaps without knowing it, taken the first step in a great and unique phase of religious development in all Protestant Christendom.

The other thing that comes within our view is the method which Schleiermacher applies in the treatment of religious questions; in particular how, from data so vague and formless as seem to be indicated thus far, he attempts to body forth the forms of Christian faith.

Everything, in such a task as this, depends on the material in hand to start with. Of matter properly speculative or dogmatic, as we have seen, Schleiermacher has almost nothing. To the last he left it a matter of doubt whether any of the points of common Christian doctrine were matters of belief with him or not. He starts, however, as his postulate,

with this plain matter of fact: *I am a Christian.* By introspection and analysis he will see what that fact implies; and this shall be his Christian creed.

Now religion means to him "communion of life with the living God." This Deity may be Spinoza's, —which in fact it seems greatly to resemble. But, at all events, God is no dead phrase, no empty name. He is the Universal Life; and dependence on that Source is necessarily an element in all our profounder consciousness. Now it is in our dependence on the Universal Life that we first find ourselves emancipated from the world of sense, so that morality becomes possible;* and in this feeling of our dependence we have the first essential germ of that spiritual life which in its unfolding is Religion.

Again, following the same method, we find our body of doctrine in *the data of Christian consciousness.* Here Schleiermacher parts from what is absolute or universal. It is impossible, from his point of view, to find any dogmatic necessity in the Christian body of doctrine as such. Such a phrase as that belief in it is "necessary to salvation" has no longer any meaning, — unless it be that a realizing of what our best thought is, is necessary to our best intellectual life. If Schleiermacher had been a Mussulman or Buddhist, he must by his own method have analyzed the Mussulman or Buddhist consciousness, and not the Christian. There is, accordingly, a seeming sophism, or else an illogical narrowing of the ground, when, as we presently find, he takes not the human

* Compare the experience of St. Augustine: "Early Christianity," p. 138.

but the Christian consciousness — not even broadly the Christian, but the German-Protestant-Lutheran-Moravian-Reformed religious consciousness — as his base of operations, and spends thick volumes in building upon it a structure as little differing from the old theology in shape and proportion as the landscape reflected in a lake differs from the landscape seen beyond the shore.

Facts of the religious life lend themselves not easily, and only by a sophistry perhaps unconscious, to be shaped into a dogmatic system. The system can at best only co-ordinate, it cannot legitimate, the facts. We shall probably not be far wrong, if we consider that Schleiermacher's essential work, as a man of original religious genius, was done in the powerful impulse he gave at starting to the higher thought of Germany; and if we consider that which followed as the valuable but only incidental and subsidiary service of a long, devoted, and useful life.

Strictly speaking, it would appear that the value of his service consists more in what he has added to our knowledge of the facts of religious experience in themselves, than in any system of philosophy built upon those facts. The experience itself is the most obscure and disputed ground in our study of human nature. It is also the highest ground. When we find ourselves in the range of those thoughts and emotions expressed by such words as contrition, aspiration, reverence, reconciliation, religious peace, — to say nothing of such more passionate emotions as moral heroism, poetic enthusiasm, spiritual ecstasy, — then we know that we are dealing with the upper

ranges of experience and character. We touch that which is most characteristically human, as distinct from the motives and limitations of animal life. And he helps us most, for what is best in life, who makes us feel, most distinctly and powerfully, that that range of it is both attainable and real.

Now from that region of thought and emotion there emerge two or three strongly defined convictions, which appear to be taken for granted in that range of experience just as the reality of the outward world is taken for granted in every act of perception. These convictions are what we call *the fundamental data of religious consciousness;* and they are commonly stated to be these three: the Being of God, Moral Freedom (or better, perhaps, in this connection, the Law of Holiness), and the Immortality of the Soul.* In what sense are these convictions implied in our religious consciousness? and in what sense can they be said to be verified by the facts of that consciousness? These two questions state the fundamental problem of speculative theology, as distinct from mere psychology on one side, or mere dogmatism on the other.

In approaching this problem, we are met at the outset by two opposite schools, or tendencies of thought, — the "positive," which limits us strictly to the facts themselves, with the laws of sequence and association to be traced among them; and the "transcen-

* In the dialect of Kant, moral freedom belongs only to the *homo noumenon* as distinguished from the *homo phænomenon.* The "actual man," it would appear, cuts a pitiful figure in presence of the demand made upon him by the Kantian ethics.

dental," which holds that the object of belief is, as much as any external object of perception, a reality independent and (so to speak) outside of the mind which apprehends it. We have only to do, at present, with the latter.

We might put the question, already stated, in another form, namely: "Are the objects of religious conviction — God, Freedom, Immortality — truths of reason; or are they only the moods, or the reflections, of our experience?" But this turn given to the question has the difficulty, that it introduces us to the phrases and the distinctions of philosophical schools, which are apt to be misleading. In particular, it is in danger of hiding from us the point at issue. The question we have raised is not one of certitude, but of certainty; not one of "truth," but of "fact."

Again, in stating the question to ourselves, we find that we have to deal not merely with three *objects* of belief, but with three different *orders* of belief; and that each of them is to be met by a different process from the rest. The same criterion will not apply to them all. One is the object of intellectual contemplation or moral reverence; one, of the special emotion of loyalty and obedience; one, of that bold hope which will recognize no limit to the life that seems opening immeasurably before it.

What we can possibly call proof, or evidence, from a given state of mind, will apply in very different measure to the three. Thus we may speak, accurately enough, of a "consciousness of God." We do speak with the strictest conceivable accuracy of a "consciousness of moral freedom." We can speak

only by a violent figure (as is often done) of a "consciousness of immortality," — which means, if it means anything, consciousness now of endless future states of consciousness. Cicero's expression, "a fore-feeling" (*præsensio*), is a much better expression, and is perhaps the nearest approach we can make to a true account of that phase of experience. Strictly speaking, then, the conviction of immortality remains, as to its speculative ground, not a conscious knowledge but at best a fore-feeling or apprehension, — more probably a hope or dread, as the case may be. What we can be really conscious of is not the *duration*, but the *quality*, of the life we call spiritual. And the more intense our realizing of it, the more we shall find that the quality is a far more important matter than the duration.

Moreover, when we deal with that deepest of religious convictions, the Being of God, the answer we find will depend on the "attributes" or limitations we attach to that Name. If we mean by it (what many have found in it) simply an expression for the Universal Life, the *consensus* of all laws and forces, known or unknown, — then the existence of God is a self-evident truth. It is, in short, merely one term of an identical equation. It is a verbal definition which we are agreed beforehand to accept. Our intellectual assent may well enough be taken for granted. It only remains, by increase of knowledge or play of imagination, to comprehend as best we may the universe of fact which we have embraced in our definition.

But this "cosmic theism" (as it has been called)

leaves out of sight precisely the one thing which makes the name of God venerable and dear to the religious feeling. The attribute of Holiness can have no possible meaning to our mind, unless it is set over against that which is unholy, base, profane. In other words, it reflects one mood of that moral conflict in which we find ourselves plunged as human beings. To such a mood the thought of God as the Absolute — which swallows up all distinctions, so that the hint of conflict is a contradiction in terms — brings no satisfaction: it is rather the keenest affront. To say that God is the source of all life, all force, is perfectly satisfying as a postulate of speculative theology. That poetic pantheism, that fair unmoral Paganism, fits well enough the wide and placid landscape of mental contemplation. But when it comes to mean (as it must mean) not only that the germinating life and the law of social evolution are acts of God, but just as much the explosive force of dynamite, and the ferocity that would use it to wreck the social fabric; the hideous disease alike with the healing skill that fights it; the crime and the criminal on exactly equal terms with the heroism and the saint, — then we find how worthless for any religious uses is that fine-sounding definition, after all. The term "God" in this sense has only one advantage, that I can see, over "The Absolute" or "The Unknowable" or "Persistent Energy" or "Stream of Tendency," — that it is shorter, and easier to speak or spell.

In one sense, then, — and that sense the deepest and most practical, — the interpretation given us in a cosmic theism (which is the best that speculative

theology alone can do) is not an interpretation that meets any religious need. It is seen to be not only independent, but even destructive, of that other co-ordinate term in the religious experience, the recognition of a Law of Holiness. The two are not only distinct, but hostile. The speculative Dualism which was once their way of reconciliation has always, since Augustine, been hateful to the Christian sense, and in the eye of any modern philosophy would be intolerable. To many of the best and most serious minds it has therefore seemed unavoidable to throw up the speculative problem; at least, to leave it for the plaything of the understanding, not as hoping by its solution to cast light on the real business of life. Of the three elements, or data, of the religious consciousness, that central one, which declares the Law of Holiness (or the reality of moral obligation), has appeared to such minds the only one that can have a permanent religious value as a basis of scientific deduction or as an object of speculative thought.

This does not, however, mean that we forfeit or deny any object of our religious contemplation, reverence, awe, or hope. It only means that the problem of the Universe is too vast to be reduced within range of the speculative understanding. It means that any intellectual statement is worthless, which pretends to make the Infinite Intelligence, or its way of working, comprehensible to human thought. When we say that "the mind is free" in presence of the insoluble problem of the universe, we must necessarily mean not only the pious mind, but the secular, the scientific, the agnostic mind. Each will find its own

thought reflected, "as in a glass, darkly," in that strangely multiplying mirror which the Universe must always be to us.

And I do not see why we should be in the least anxious to prove a speculative theism, in the way in which that feat has usually been performed. After all, our best notion of that which is infinite and universal must always be a sort of poetry. Who, or what, or how God is, can be spoken only in symbols to human thought. And in all our thought upon that matter we have to remember that the symbol is not the thing, — any more than when in the poetry of the Hebrews it was spoken of God's hands and feet and eyes and fingers. Our language, too, upon this topic is symbol, not science; is poetry, not prose; is song, not creed.

Let us apply the same thought to the second element of the religious consciousness. God, we are told, — also in language of poetic symbol, — is "the Eternal, not ourselves, that makes for righteousness." Some metaphysicians say that there is no power, not ourselves, which makes for righteousness; that goodness, justice, mercy, love, are only thoughts, emotions, qualities, of our own souls. Still, let us not quarrel about the phrase. All such phrases are only hints and symbols of the fact. Of God *outside* of us — in the universe, in the realm of visible things — it is impossible for us to know anything at all, except so far as we can see order, method, purpose, in the laws of Nature, in the processes of Evolution. It is that *within* us which makes for righteousness, — or, in the Christian symbol, "the Word made flesh and dwell-

ing among us, full of grace and truth," — that alone gives us a true image or revelation of the God we really adore. That power "makes for righteousness," it is true. But it is by aiding us in the struggle with what we know is evil; in the effort to establish what we know is right. So, then, except we hold fast that fundamental distinction of Right and Wrong, we cannot know anything truly about God; *we cannot even think of any God worth knowing.* Our conviction of this "element of the religious consciousness" may take the noblest form of intellectual statement, — that Infinite Good exists in the person of a Divine Will, sovereign, fatherly, gracious; but it is still "evidence of things not seen." The belief, so far forth as it is religious, is in One who "worketh *in us,* both to will and to do."

All this does not help us in the least, so far as I can see, to what we may call a distinct speculative theism; that is, to an understanding of the being and attributes of God, or of his way of working as a Conscious Agent behind the phenomena of the universe. As to that, we are unable to see that the human mind has made any advance at all, since the days of the world's childhood. Except for the greater wealth of subject-matter contributed by science and the experience of mankind, the speculations of the Stoics are exactly as good as the speculations of the Hegelians, and no better.

If we were to be asked to give an intellectual expression to our religious belief, doubtless we should not do it in the form of Paley's argument for a Contriving Mind, or any expositions of the metaphysical Abso-

lute, or the scientist's demonstration of a Cosmic Theism. Either of these we may take for symbol, as far as they will go. But we might do better to go back even as far as the language of the Bible, which contains the frankest and noblest symbolism that has yet gone into human speech. This would be truer to us: not because it is clearer in argument than Paley, or nicer in metaphysical subtilties than Hegel, or more convincing than the processes of modern science; but because it carries our thought by more lines of sacred association, and by a greater uplifting of the religious imagination, to that Universal Life, of which the truest thing we can say is, by a sublime personification, this: that "in Him we live and move and have our being."

But we cannot forget here the great service which Schleiermacher, and those who have worked in the same general direction with him, have done for the religious life of this latter time. The mere fact that for dogmatic theology they have substituted speculative theology, — that for a cruel and despotic Creed they have given us its insubstantial and harmless reflection in the mirror of Christian experience, — is a revolution such as the early Reformers could never have dreamed of. It is all there: the Incarnation, the Trinity, the Atonement, Election, and the Judgment; but as different from the menacing and imperious dogmas of the past as the fair reflection in a lake, or the bright landscape on canvas, is from the bleak precipices and horrible chasms of an Alpine range. In color and shape you could not tell the difference. That difference is in the lack of substance and of life.

No mobs, like those at Ephesus, will fight for the honor of the spectral Second Person of this spectral Trinity. No fires, like those of Seville and Geneva, will be kindled to suppress the heresies that may assail the dim Phantasmagory. The dogma has become simply a fact of religious consciousness; and, as such, a constituent part of modern philosophic thought. Here is its harmlessness; for nobody is afraid of a reflection in a mirror. Here, too, is its security; for nobody can hurt a shadow.

The chief service, however, is done, not by merely making the dogma harmless and spectral, but by linking modern forms of thought and experience with the old sanctities of the religious life. Those wonderful Triads which Coleridge borrowed (it is said) from Schelling, and took to be a sort of mystic Trinity, may seem to us, it is true, a mere play of words; but they greatly widened the horizon of English thought, and led the way to a far larger and freer intellectual life among those whose narrow orthodoxy has been sublimated into the rare ether of his transcendental speculation. The thin formularies which Cousin and his school of French Eclectics translated out of Hegel are already a little the worse for wear; but fifty years ago they were full of a kindling vigor for minds that had grown discontented with the narrow issues of the New England Unitarian controversy. And, of more value than either of these effects, it may well be believed that the most intelligent and vital piety in American or Scottish orthodoxy to-day is where its teachers have been, without knowing it, emancipated from the cramps of a sterile bigotry by

the mellower and tenderer atmosphere of the German speculative theology.

This result was the easier, because Schleiermacher was no bleak and arid metaphysician, but a man full of a sweet piety, a steady patriotism, a noble integrity, and moral earnestness. Historian, critic, scholar, theologian, his great function was to be the most eminent of preachers to the souls of his own people; the tenderest of friends and counsellors to his nearer circle of friends. So that, with all his intellectual eminence, and his fame as a constructor of the new theology, it remains his true glory that he sought its foundations in his own experience, and that he made it a fresh testimony and help to the reality of the religious life.

XI.

THE REIGN OF LAW.

UNIVERSAL Law, in the sense we give to that phrase, is a very modern notion. It is hardly more than two hundred years since the first completed step was taken towards that conception, in what we call the Law of Gravitation; and it is not thirty, since that other great stride was made towards it, which we call the Law of Evolution. Especially, it is not till lately that we have come to see with some distinctness its bearings upon our religious thought. And it is from this point of view, not the purely scientific, that we have to regard it now.

Practically, it is true, the regular sequences in Nature — such as day and night, the change of seasons, the moon's phases, eclipses, and the like — have been known and acted on from a very early time; and the heavens have thus always been held as signs of a Cosmic or Divine Order, which could not be traced in things terrestrial. It is in this sense that they are said to "declare the glory of God," in the nineteenth Psalm, whose theme is the exaltation of "the Law of the Lord." This is all that is really meant in the famous paragraph of Hooker, in which he might at first sight seem to be speaking of what we mean by Universal Law: —

"Of Law there can be no less acknowledged than that her seat is in the bosom of God, her voice the harmony of the world. All things in heaven and earth do her homage: the very least as feeling her care, and the greatest as not exempted from her power. Both angels and men, and creatures of what condition soever, though each in different sort and manner, yet all with uniform consent, admiring her as the mother of their peace and joy."

These noble words follow a highly rhetorical passage, which admits such suppositions as the following, which the scientific mind is wholly unable to conceive or entertain: —

"If Nature should intermit her course, and leave altogether, though it were for a while, the observation of her own laws; . . . if celestial spheres should forget their wonted motions, and by irregular volubility turn themselves any way as it might happen; . . . if the moon should wander from her beaten way, the times and seasons of the year blend themselves by disordered and confused mixtures, the winds breathe out their last gasp, the clouds yield no rain, the earth be defective of heavenly influence, the fruits of the earth pine away, as children at the withered breasts of their mother, no longer able to yield them relief, — what would become of man himself, whom these things do now all serve?"

The whole passage is, in short, a vigorous and splendid personification to magnify the glory of God as Sovereign, who holds as it were the planets in a leash, and by personal guidance and control keeps all things to their appointed track. The conception is as purely poetic, and as little modern, as that in

the fortieth chapter of Isaiah, or in the nineteenth Psalm.

There is one great name in English literature, which is generally thought to stand for the first distinct advance to the modern or scientific view. But one who should look for this in Bacon would look in vain. He would find a great many fine and eloquent things, but no conception whatever of Law in its modern sense. Bacon had visions of what might be effected, in a utilitarian way, by turning men's minds from logical puzzles to discovery and experiment in the field of Nature; and he had a brilliant way of putting these visions to the imagination. But his motive is wholly that of a statesman, a man of letters, a theorist of restless, sagacious, and versatile intelligence. Of what we should call scientific contemplation — still more, of harmonizing the wider generalization with the conception of religious truth — he is wholly void and incapable. Intellectually, the task he sets about is "the Advancement of Learning;" that is, of interesting and curious information. Practically, his aim is to turn that knowledge to useful or delightful ends, — health, wealth, art, comfort. Religiously, he rather widens the gulf between what can be shown by the "dry light" of reason and what is assumed in the offices of faith. He even exaggerates the paradoxes of his creed over against the plain teachings of the understanding. "Theology," he says, "is grounded only upon the word and oracle of God, and not upon the light of Nature." Most of his "New Organon" consists in emptying upon the page the contents of a commonplace-book, gathered

with curious and painstaking industry, interspersed with vivacious and penetrating hints, and illuminated here and there by phrases and figures that have stamped themselves upon the speech of the world. His mind was as completely shut to the great work of positive science going on in his day as it was to the religious and moral forces then at the heart of English life. He refused to accept the Copernican system of the heavens. Although he recommended vivisection, he believed nothing, or cared nothing, about Harvey's great discovery of the circulation of the blood. He seems never to have heard of the revolutionary work in experimental physics then going on in the Italian schools. To employ his own phrase, no man living in his day was more completely than he subject to "Idols of the Market" and "Idols of the Theatre." If Goethe ever said that "Bacon drew a sponge over human knowledge," — in the sense that he led the way in a revolution of thought on the higher matters of contemplation, — it is not likely that Goethe ever read him.

That revolution of thought was going on, exactly contemporaneous with Bacon's brilliant career in politics and letters, under the patient and ingenious labors of a very different class of minds. In 1602 Galileo demonstrated by his experiments that falling bodies pass through space with a motion *uniformly accelerated*. This established two facts, which we may regard as the first steps towards the conception of natural law in its strict modern sense; namely, that such bodies are acted on constantly by a uniform force of some sort (known as "terrestrial gravita-

tion") drawing them that way; and that the spaces they traverse will be "directly as the squares of the times" through which they fall.

What made this step a revolutionary one was, that for the first time *a numerical ratio* was clearly established between the two elements of time and space concerned in the experiment. This signal achievement was the key by which, it is not too much to say, the path of modern scientific discovery — meaning by this the discovery of law, not merely of fact — was opened to the human mind. It was the verifying of a new method; and so was of far higher intellectual value than those discoveries and verifications of fact which Galileo made a few years later (1610), in his observations of the phases of Venus and the satellites of Jupiter, and which appealed so much more quickly to the common imagination.

Again, at the same time with Galileo's experiments, Kepler was demonstrating, by his ingenious and patient analysis, the true paths of the heavenly bodies. It was in 1609 that he "led Mars captive to the foot of Rodolph's throne," having triumphantly established those two out of the three "Laws of Kepler," which alone concern us now; namely, that the true path of the planet is an ellipse, having the sun in one of the foci; and that "the radius vector describes equal areas in equal times," — in other words, the nearer the planet is to the sun the faster it goes. Here, again, is a most important numerical ratio established between the apparently independent conditions of space and time; and it was in consideration of the transcendent importance of this as a

step in the progress of human thought, not in vain exultation at having discovered a barren fact, that he uttered the famous boast, that he might well wait a generation for readers, since God himself had waited six thousand years for an interpreter.*

The physical theories of Descartes, based on purely geometrical conceptions, fill up the next half-century in the history of science after Kepler's death; but — with immense advances in method, and with such interesting discoveries in detail as those of Torricelli and Pascal before spoken of † — no great step had as yet been taken towards defining the conception of Universal Law. It was surmised, indeed, that the same force of gravitation, established by experiments on falling bodies, might hold good in the heavens, and even the law of the diminution of its force in the ratio of the square of the distance — so that a body twice as far from the earth's centre would weigh only one fourth as much — had been pretty confidently maintained as theory. So that the work done by Newton, in 1682, in establishing the theory of universal gravitation, was by no means (what is sometimes popularly supposed) a happy guess, confirmed by later observations. It was a careful and patient induction, bringing to a decisive test what

* It is curious to remember, in connection with this great step in positive science, that it was Kepler who cast the horoscope for the imperial but superstitious Wallenstein. "Nature," said he, "who has bestowed on every creature the means of subsistence, has given Astrology as an adjunct and ally to Astronomy." It may be well here to recall that Galileo was but three years, and Kepler ten years, younger than their great contemporary Bacon.

† See above, p. 113.

had before seemed hopelessly out of the reach of any proof; and, as before, the test is that of accurate mathematical ratio.

What is necessary in order to explain the method Newton followed in his discovery, with sufficient accuracy for the general student of thought, can be told in a few words. Suppose the law of gravitation already taught by Galileo to hold good to an indefinite distance from the earth; and suppose the moon to be (which in fact she pretty nearly is) sixty times as far from the earth's centre as we are upon its surface, — it will follow that she falls, or is drawn, towards the earth in a minute as far as a stone would fall in a second; that is, sixteen feet. If at this moment she were to "go off on a tangent," in an hour she would be as much farther from the earth than her proper orbit, as a stone would fall through free space in a minute, — that is to say, about ten miles and a half. In two hours she would have been deflected four times as much; that is, about forty-two miles. Now the moon goes round the earth once in about twenty-seven days — that is, one degree in rather less than two hours — with a radius of about two hundred and forty thousand miles; and a table of "angular functions" enables us to calculate in a moment the distance she actually "falls," or is deflected, in that time. This is, in fact, almost exactly the distance just supposed, of forty-two miles. Taken in this rough way, the figures do not correspond quite closely enough to prove the theory. But the correspondence is near enough, for our present purpose, to illustrate the method of demonstration on

which Newton relied.* The process, so far, was very simple; and it is not likely it cost him one tenth the mental labor which he spent on his splendid experiments in Optics.

That Newton himself was well aware of the intellectual revolution implied in this great step of discovery is shown in two very interesting points of his biography, one of them first made clear (I believe) in his "Life" by Sir David Brewster. He had shaped the theory, in this general way, in a vacation-season in 1666, when he left London to avoid the plague; and spending the summer in the country, he saw (what was very likely a rare sight to him) the fall of a real apple from a real tree, which, it is said, set him to reflecting. But the distance of the moon can only be known, indirectly, when we know the size of the earth first; and as this had been very imperfectly measured in those days (Newton assuming sixty miles, instead of nearly seventy, for the length of a degree), his figures would not fit. So, with wonderful modesty and patience, he laid aside his calculations, as if they had no further use. But in 1682, after waiting more than sixteen years, he heard

* The "natural secant" of one degree, after subtracting the radius, is 0.000152, which gives, with sufficient accuracy, the result above stated (*i. e.*, 36.48 miles, to which one ninth should be added, as the lunar revolution is twenty-seven days, and not thirty). This result, multiplied by the squares 4, 9, 16, may be easily followed up for a series of 2, 3, and 4 degrees in the moon's motion. Newton's own statement, with the figures he used, is given in the Third Book of the *Principia*, Prop. iv. Theor. 4.

A most instructive view of the steps by which Astronomy advanced from scattered observations to the comprehension of universal law is given in Whewell's "Philosophy of the Inductive Sciences."

that more accurate measurements of the length of a degree had been made in France. He now took his papers from their place; he examined the figures again; and then, as the approximation drew closer and closer, he fell into a great trembling, and gave over the calculation to a friend, who easily completed the final steps. We, too, if we try to bring back the fact as it was then, may well share the profound awe of that emotion. For, indeed, it was one of the solemn moments of human history. It must have seemed to him as if at that one instant he were in contact with the very Life of things; as if, to use Kepler's phrase, he were just then "thinking the thoughts of God!"

For Newton's mind was reverent and humble; and he was quick, both to himself and to the world, to give a religious meaning to his conception of universal law. This is contained in the celebrated "General Scholium" at the end of his *Principia*: —

"This most admirable (*elegantissima*) system of Sun, planets, and comets could not have arisen except by the contrivance and command of an intelligent and mighty Being. . . . He rules all, not as Soul of the World, but as Lord of the Universe. . . . The Supreme God is a Being eternal, infinite, absolutely perfect; but, without dominion, a Being, however perfect, is not the Lord God. . . . From his actual dominion it follows, that the true God is living, intelligent, and mighty. He is eternal, infinite, almighty, and all-knowing."

In an age of ever so rapid and brilliant discoveries of fact, it is of still far higher intellectual interest to watch the slow and painful evolution of an Idea. It

is not too much to say that the very notion men have of natural law underwent a slow revolution, as they came to understand the meaning and reach of Newton's great discovery. For, to the scientific mind, Law is not only the most general expression of a fact: it is also the expression of an ultimate fact. It is only by a figure of speech — it is, in fact, by a misconception of the idea — that we sometimes hear it said that "Law implies a Lawgiver;" and so, that it is further proof of the existence of God. Unless the existence of God is taken for granted first, the contemplation of Law has even, as we constantly see in the history of science, a distinct effect to draw the mind away from any thought of Him.

In the purely scientific sense, the first notion we get of Law is that which we find in certain sequences of numbers, and in the truths of geometry. But no one supposes that a law has been appointed to determine that the differences of consecutive squares shall always increase by two, or that the three angles of a triangle shall always equal two right angles. Pythagoras is said to have sacrificed a hundred oxen in gratitude for the discovery of the "forty-seventh proposition;" but it was to the Power not that had decreed the fact, but that had given him intelligence to understand the fact.

Now the last and highest generalizations of science always tend to figure themselves in our mind both as *ultimate* and as *necessary* facts. Newton himself is wholly baffled in the attempt to state to himself a possible cause of gravitation: *hypotheses non fingo,* he declares, in speaking of it. To him it is simply, as

we have seen, "an act of God." Once vigorously conceived, any denial of these generalizations, or the imagination of anything different, becomes as impossible as to think of a triangle whose angles should make more or less than two right angles. It is important to see, at the outset, this meaning in what we call universal law. It does not forbid us to hold the purely religious conception of a Power, or a Life, beyond or above the realm of natural Law. But it does forbid us to think of the law itself as in any sense arbitrary or repealable. It compels us, with the present limitation of our powers, to regard the law as (so far as it goes) an expression of the ultimate constitution of things; as an eternal Attribute (if we may express it so) of whatever we mean by the phrase "Eternal Being."

It cannot be denied that this view is in violent conflict with those opinions about the Divine Life which have generally been thought essential to piety. We are greatly helped, therefore, if we would see the matter just as it is, by the fact that the revolution of thought involved in Newton's grand generalization had to do with a sphere of being quite out of men's reach, which had always been regarded as cosmic and eternal; and that it has long been accepted with perfect acquiescence — nay, with devout expansion and joy — by the most religious minds, as a positive help in their pious contemplation of the universe. So the sober English mind accepted it from the first. Theologians like Clarke, trained in Newton's Physics, were for applying his method at once to the solution of the profoundest problems in speculative theology.

Critics like Bentley sought Newton's correspondence, so as to make clearer to their own minds their conceptions of fundamental truth. Addison wrote his melodious Hymn under the immediate inspiration of the Newtonian physics. And it was, no doubt, with the applause of the polite companies who listened to his brilliant talk, that Young wrote, in his sententious verse,

"An undevout Astronomer is mad."

But there is a class of minds, to which the very precision of the scientific view seems to take away the halo of a great glory from their contemplation of the universe. Astronomers tell us there is nothing so fine to be seen through their telescopes as what we see for ourselves every clear night with the naked eye.* The heavens have always been, to the common mind, a free range for poetry and fancy, and the abode of a very idealized but intensely real life. As the older mythologies faded out of them, their place was filled by the crystalline celestial spheres, such as we find in Dante, which made a vivid and sacredly cherished article of Mediæval faith. In the earlier invasions of astronomy, so long as the conception of Force was absent, the very intricacy and perfection of the celestial geometry might seem all the more to demand a Divine Pilot to guide those splendid luminaries in their vast orbits, in their unfailing periods. Kepler was not so illogical as he may appear to us, when he clung to the notion that Astrology might, after all, be a sort of handmaid to Astronomy.

* See Searle's Outlines of Astronomy, p. 207.

Even the vast sweep of the Cartesian "vortices" might seem to need the intelligent interposition of a guiding Hand to keep them uniform, untroubled, and strong. Leibnitz (who was four years younger than Newton) remained better content with that way of explaining things; and we may suppose that it was quite as much from an honest conservative apprehension of the revolution coming to pass in the higher thought as from personal jealousy of a rival fame, when in his private correspondence he warned the Princess Caroline * of the religious consequences that would be sure to follow from the new Celestial Mechanics. His deep sagacity foresaw that the time would come when it should no longer be said that "the heavens declare the glory of God;" but that (as Comte puts it) "they declare the glory of Hipparchus, of Kepler, and of Newton!"

In fact, Newton's own conception — of "tangential motion" having been given at first, outright, to the planets,† which were thereafter to be controlled by the central attraction of the Sun — gave way in course of time to the "nebular hypothesis" of Laplace, who showed very clearly how shape, as well as motion, could be given to the Solar System by that universal force acting freely on an irregularly diffused body of nebulous matter in the open sky. Less than forty years ago religious thinkers were still struggling with that new conception, and considering how it might

* Afterwards the Queen Caroline of "The Heart of Midlothian."

† He himself says that he cannot conceive of this tangential motion having been given except by the direct act of Deity. (Letter to Dr. Bentley.)

possibly be held along with any theistic faith.* That little ruffle of controversy is almost forgotten now; and, for a generation at least, all thinking minds have become wonted to the idea that the heavens are controlled, to all intents and purposes, by universal, unvarying, and impersonal Law. And the same may be said of "the uniformity of cosmic forces" through incalculable periods of time, as shown in the science of Geology, — which, in this regard, is simply a portion, or a sequel, of physical Astronomy.

In the century and a half of physical discovery and widening generalization that has followed since Newton's death, it is not necessary to point out the single steps which mark the cardinal dates of the revolution.† There is only one which, though in a far obscurer sphere, appears to involve consequences equally radical and far-reaching with those of Newton's great discovery. This is Dalton's law of Definite Proportions and Elective Affinities in Chemistry. It is not quite so well adapted for popular illustration as the sublime generalizations of Astronomy. But, if we will think of it a moment, it carries the thought of guiding Intelligence still more intimately and deeply into the constitution of things.

As we know now, most of the differences we find among objects — in color, texture, weight, and other apparent properties — depend on numerical proportions (measured by so-called "atomic weights")

* In the "Christian Examiner" of 1845, Dr. Lamson admitted that the nebular hypothesis "is not necessarily atheistic"!

† These are briefly rehearsed in "Our Liberal Movement," pp. 192, 193.

among the two, three, or more so-called "elements" of which they are made up. And when we go over into organic chemistry, we find the same thing holding good, though with such amazing intricacies and complexities of proportion as to baffle us completely, when we try to think what must be that synthesis, or stable equilibrium among them, which we call Life.

It will be convenient then, for our present purpose, to keep ourselves to what is most simple and familiar. The "symbols" of chemistry are perfectly easy to understand, and those of any consequence to us are very few. Moreover, for the uses of our argument, we need have nothing to do with the more difficult and staggering conceptions of "the new chemistry," * with the strange theories of "molecular physics," † or with the troublesome nomenclature invented to describe the higher orders of compounds. It is not with the encyclopædia of facts in any science, but only with one or two of its fundamental truths, that we have to deal, if we would trace its bearings in other fields of thought, motive, or belief.

Now, if we look attentively at one of the very simplest chemical phenomena, — say the reactions which take place when we pour vitriol upon chalk, — we find that the base (lime) instantly and energetically *elects* the sulphuric acid, rejecting the carbonic in the form of gas, and turning into quite

* Such as the swift and incessant movements of the molecules of vapor.

† Such as Helmholtz's "vortical rings."

another substance (gypsum). Why? Only (it would seem) because such is its own "elective affinity," — carried out, too, with an infallible accuracy of measure and proportion, which in human acts would show a high though strictly limited order of intelligence.

We find, in a different example, that four elements in solution, two from each of the substances employed, have rushed eagerly, and with unerring sagacity, *crosswise* into a new arrangement; * each forsaking its former partner, and combining, in some haste and violence, with the other, the new compound having hardly a single property in common with the old.

There is, so far as we can see, no external force to compel them to this, and none to direct them in it. All depends on what we call the "properties" of the ingredients themselves. The thing we note, with constantly deepening wonder and surprise, is that the process is one of unfailing and (seemingly) absolute *intelligence* in each of the constituents, within its own narrow sphere of action. Of the elements concerned in the experiment we know absolutely nothing (beyond their atomic weights and a few simple properties), except that they are liable to such escapades as these, with resulting qualities and effects which in some degree we have ascertained beforehand and can determine. Of the process itself

* This is easily illustrated by pouring together a clear solution of *nitrate of silver* and of *chloride of sodium* (common salt). A chalk-white mass of *chloride of silver* instantly falls to the bottom, and what remains in solution is *nitrate of sodium* (soda-saltpetre), which is then crystallized by evaporation.

we know absolutely nothing, except that it results from the (apparently) free choice, the "elective affinities," which may exist among these bodies, so that without external constraint they take one in preference to another; and that there is infallible precision in determining, by "definite proportions," the quantities in which they will mingle. It would require the most scrupulous care of the most skilful chemist to weigh them out with anything like the intelligent accuracy they show of themselves, as soon as the opportunity is offered them.

Here again, on the minutest and most intricate scale, as before on the broadest and most sublime, we come upon the universal Intelligence which makes the cosmic order, shown in the same way, of accurate numerical ratio, — not, this time, between elements of time and space, but between "atomic weights," that is, different and independent manifestations of force. And if anything could deepen the awe with which we stand in presence of this ultimate fact, or cosmic law of things, it would be that we live in a world made up of such compounds, — in equilibrium stable enough to give us innumerable substances solid and familiar to our handling; but unstable enough to show how, under conditions somewhat different, but perfectly conceivable, they might all fly away in vapor, or else build for us "new heavens and a new earth," wildly remote from anything we have seen or known.

To complete the conception just given in the sphere of chemistry, we need to look at it from two opposite points of view, one of them showing it in

the range of cosmic immensity, the other in the intricacy of vital processes.

We should take on the one hand the revelations of the spectroscope as to the light of sun, stars, and nebulæ. This order of discovery simply means, to us, that the elements of which the heavenly bodies are composed would be subject, under similar conditions, to precisely the same chemical reactions which we are continually reproducing in our experiments. Thus we find, in chemistry as well as in astronomy and mechanics, the exhibition not only of terrestrial but of universal law.

On the other hand, we should try to realize to ourselves some of the conceptions of modern physiology. And here we find that we are quite unconsciously bearing about in our bodily structure a laboratory of enormous power, which with an energy of chemical action we can noway conceive is turning out every day four or five gallons of its highly elaborated compounds. We find a pailful of hot blood rushing, as fast as a strong man walks, through innumerable arteries and veins, propelled by a muscle weighing less than a pound, that shall not pause a single second in its energetic contractions and expansions, for a lifetime of more than eighty years. We find a chemistry of digestion so potent as — by the astonishing solvent which it brews daily to the amount of one-tenth the weight of the entire body — in a few hours to change the beggar's crust and the epicure's banquet of fifty flavors into the same indistinguishable vital fluid. We find an electric battery to do our thinking by, made up of more than twelve hun-

dred million cells connected by five thousand million filaments of nerve. We find all this stupendous apparatus undergoing every day a process of slow burning down and building up, measured in part by the muscular, mental, and emotional force put forth, but far the greater part by the vital heat developed in the destruction of its tissues, and the astonishing creative or building process by which they are renewed from day to day.

All the phenomena thus grouped in the widening circles of our knowledge, the scientific mind comes to regard as simple facts, as ultimate facts. We are as little capable of imagining to ourselves the method of operation of the superior Power which has brought them into being, acting (as it were) from the outside, as we are of creating them outright ourselves. To pretend to "account" for them amounts simply to giving that Power a name, and so to save ourselves the trouble of thinking, by refusing to see the blank mystery which it involves.

As John Stuart Mill has said, the argument from the intelligence and skill seen throughout this world of wonders is, after all, the best proof we have of the existence of a God. To deny intelligent design in the universe is like denying sunshine in the landscape: it stares us in the face everywhere. But, as he further shows, this argument is beset by so many moral difficulties, as soon as we follow it into detail, that it has little or no religious value. We may even say that — so far as any value of that sort is considered — the logic of final causes had better not be studied too closely, except by a religious mind.

That is, as Bacon might say, the Medusa which has turned many a living man to stone. The scientific motive is, after all, a good deal safer than the teleological. And this is, simply to ascertain the facts, with the "laws of similitude and succession" that can be established among them; and, having done this, to regard them as ultimate and (in any philosophical sense) unaccountable.

We have thus, both in the cosmic order of the heavens and in the bodily conditions of human life, come to take frankly the view which sees in them the working out of universal law. In what concerns the higher life of humanity — intellect, emotion, spiritual beliefs, and historic evolution — we do not as yet seem to see traces of the same unvarying order. The nearest we have come to that is in ascertaining the physiological conditions under which we think and feel; but it would be begging the whole philosophical question if we should assume that these conditions produce, or in fact do anything more than limit and qualify, the higher mental and moral activities we are conscious of. And the question which remains is, Whether, or how far, these ranges of our life may be taken in and comprehended under the same universal Order which we recognize in the domain of physics.

Speculatively, we should say at once that they can. And from the point of view of pure speculation there has never, in fact, been any doubt. Whether an eternal Necessity, or a Divine Decree, or a scientific Determinism, or a doctrine of universal Evolution, the presumption is still in favor of the same

invariable and unalterable sequence, in all ranges of being, absolutely without exception. If logical consistency were all, the case stops here.

But logical consistency is not scientific proof. The assertion of law — that is, absolute uniformity of sequence — within a given sphere is purely an hypothesis, until it is verified by certain tests. The chief of these tests, perhaps the only valid ones, are these two, — *prediction* and *control.* The final proof of the law of gravitation prevailing throughout the Solar System was considered to have been given when, in 1846, Leverrier made the prediction which was verified by the discovery of Neptune. Hitherto, the law had explained all the known phenomena; now, it predicted one that was unknown and unsuspected. If the weather could be predicted in like manner, we should know that we had the true law of atmospheric changes. In both these cases the phenomena are out of our reach, and accurate prediction is our only test. In such matters as chemistry, we submit the case in hand to our experiments; we reproduce the conditions, as well as we can, in our laboratory; and only when we can say with confidence that we can produce certain results, do we know that we have the law.

This test is what makes the difference between a scientific truth and a mere accumulation of facts observed and registered, which (for example) geology was so long; or a probable generalization from an immense number of observations, which is the condition of the Darwinian theory to-day. The *process* of the genesis of species by natural evolution, and

even by way of natural selection, is made (it may be) increasingly probable; but it is only rhetorically that we can speak of it as a law. Of two inconceivables, one seems less inconceivable than the other. In these departments of science the larger and the lesser ranges of observation may do much to help each other out. Still, no one, except within very narrow limits, is able to predict the facts, and no one is able to control the facts. We can only establish a probable sequence among the facts.

I have tried to state that conception of what makes scientific certainty, which is necessary in order to judge fairly the work done just here by Auguste Comte. Now Comte was a man of great eccentricities and of peculiar limitations. He had strictly marked out the limits within which he considered that he could work to advantage; and (except in his professional department of mathematics) he banished from his thought, as far as he could, everything outside those limits. Thus he was scornfully intolerant of the waste of force (as he regarded it) in theological contemplation, or the insoluble problems of metaphysics, — which have been and still are some of the noblest exercises of human thought. He was irritated and impatient that science should not keep within its proper "beat" of the Solar System, and had an active antipathy to stellar astronomy, — which we see now to be the finest range of speculative physics. He had an ignorant contempt of palæontology, as savoring of barren inquiry into the origin of things, — which proves, since his day, to be the most fruitful study of embryology on the grandest

scale. That infinitely skilful and patient working up from first principles, through molecular physics into the ranges of organic life, so splendid and impressive in Herbert Spencer's philosophy of Evolution, he not only knew nothing about, from the fact of its coming up since his day, but he would most likely have repudiated it angrily as "materialism;" that is, as turning men's thoughts to the inferior levels, away from those laws and constructions of human society which to him made the only fit or pardonable goal of "positive philosophy."

Besides, it is not with impunity that one shuts himself up, as he did, in an intellectual hermitage for twenty years. Grant that it was the necessary condition on which one indispensable task could be done, and so that he was justified in imposing it on himself. Still, that long solitary confinement must have its ill effect in a morbid irritability, an intolerant dogmatism, an inordinate conceit of the work he had to do, verging on insanity, and making him at length soberly regard himself as the high-priest of a new "Religion of Humanity," and the Supreme Pontiff of mankind.*

In dealing with a singularly massive and dominating intelligence, like that of Comte, it seems best to admit at the outset those limitations and faults, which have created even a bitter prejudice against his name among most men of science, and which are too abundantly illustrated both in his autobiograph-

* I visited M. Comte three times in Paris, in the summer of 1855, and have given such personal impressions and recollections as seemed worth noting in the "Christian Examiner" of July, 1857.

ical prefaces, and in the details of his biography. Having made these very damaging admissions, it remains true that his is, unquestionably, by far the greatest personal force that has gone into the scientific thought of the century; and that his name is significant, before every other, of the intellectual revolution which we are passing through. It must be left for the exceedingly vigorous and intelligent school of his professed disciples to vindicate this judgment in detail. My own purpose will be met, more briefly and simply, by pointing out those characteristics of his work which lie in the line of my general argument. It will be shown, I think, that in the particular path he took he does not come into comparison or competition with those eminent scientists who have given special glory to this time; while his true work is in the purely intellectual comprehension of what we mean by Universal Law.

The work, then, to be properly credited to Comte has been done, not in the gathering and classifying of scientific facts, as to which he is relatively weak. It has been done by keeping steadily in view the largest generalizations of science, and so helping in its intellectual interpretation. In particular — sooner, more firmly, and more consistently than any other eminent thinker — he conceived and held that interpretation of Law which Newton held, though waveringly, in the line of the higher physics, and which has been established with such difficulty and so recently on the plane of physiology. I do not say that his conception of it is final, or is satisfactory. With that argument, as yet, I have nothing to do. But that

notion which he aimed to fix and make clear in his title, "Positive Philosophy," must be conceived as clearly and firmly as he has stated it, in order to make any further step in the interpretation of nature possible.

This conception, in the form he has given it, was lodged in his mind (as such dominating germ-thoughts are wont to be) by a sudden act of reflection or intuition, or what at any rate seemed so. It was when he was not far from the age of twenty. The problem, as it presented itself, was — in the line of widest generalization — to find the law of evolution in the field of pure intelligence, both philosophic (the individual consciousness) and historic (the consciousness of mankind at large). To work up from physiological data, as the strict evolutionist would do, would be to falsify the conditions of the problem as he understood them. Physical data may serve for physics; but in the field of thought we must have those which are purely intellectual.

The law which he announced — which announced itself to him, we may say, in the course of twenty-four hours' strained and unremitting bent of thought — we shall very likely find crude and vague; at all events, most of the criticisms of it have proceeded upon a very crude and vague understanding of what it implies. It is commonly called "the law of the three states," or stages of mental progress. Its meaning is something like this: that the highest general conceptions which men are able to attain will be at first Theological, ascribing phenomena to direct acts of will, — either in the thing itself (fetichism), groups

of divine powers (polytheism), or a single controlling mind (monotheism); then Metaphysical, accounting for phenomena by general principles or abstractions, — as attraction, repulsion, caloric, electric fluid, vital force, and the like, — which we see presently to be merely disguising the unknowable under a pretentious name; and finally Positive, in which the most comprehensive fact we can attain in any group of facts, the "law of similitude and succession" of that order of phenomena, stands to the mind as an ultimate fact, — any attempt whatever to explain or account for it (except by comprehending it under some larger generalization) being necessarily barren and futile.

Now this law (as he regarded it) would be not only crude and vague, but manifestly false, unless it were combined with, and used to interpret, what Comte calls the "hierarchy of the sciences," — that is, the series of generalized facts, or large scientific inductions, in the order in which they yield to the forementioned law.

Here, again, it is necessary to say that the motive is not to give the most complete or serviceable schedule, as Mr. Spencer appears to assume in commenting upon it in his "Classification of the Sciences." One takes the point of view of intellectual contemplation, and the other of objective relation. Each is best for its own purpose. We need not try to judge between them, as Mr. Mill does, who decides that Comte's is on the whole the better scheme. At any rate it is the simpler. And it is perfectly clear, in the history of the sciences, that these have

emerged into the "positive stage" of interpretation in the order in which he gives them. This order is as follows: pure and applied Mathematics, Astronomy, Physics (heat, light, electricity), Chemistry, and Biology. The law of development in the intellectual history of mankind is exhibited, by way of illustration, in this series; but his treatment of the sciences themselves is only a preliminary, or by-play, to the work which Comte really means to do.

It was for the sake of this work that he shut himself up (as we may say) in that intellectual hermitage, and for nearly twenty years — from twenty-five to forty-five — made himself voluntarily a stranger to the advance of science and to all contemporary literature, whether of thought or art. The great price which this seclusion cost him, intellectually and morally, I have before spoken of. It was the price that had to be paid for what is perhaps the most massive, luminous, and instructive survey ever given of the intellectual development of mankind, — meaning by that, as he explains, the most advanced of the populations of Western Europe; those who have inherited all the past had to give, and who control the forces that will shape the future destinies of the human race.

It is an exposition that has its limitations of a too imperfect knowledge, since after the age of thirty Comte ceased to learn; and of a too dogmatic theory, since he carried into the interpretation all that hard orderliness which marked the style of Catholic dogma, and since the Catholic system always stood to him as the type of that intellectual and moral Order

which we must seek to realize, on penalty of perpetual revolution and social chaos.

A better knowledge of the facts, or one from a different point of view, would probably show that his notion of the Middle Age is excessively idealized; and that he is as unjust as he is stiff in the Catholic prejudice, which views the whole Reformation movement as outside the lines of progress, or a mere plunging into the chaos of metaphysics. But if we take him for suggestion, not for dogma, there shall hardly be found anywhere an equally instructive view; while the parallel chapters on the intellectual disintegration and the scientific reconstruction of the modern era, are essays of almost unequalled breadth, fertility, and power.*

I have but a word to say here of the so-called "Religion of Humanity," which was the dream of Comte's later years. It has been treated by the majority of its critics with quite undeserved contempt, but with still more unpardonable ignorance. Grant that the attempt is absurd, even grotesque, to restore the forms of Mediævalism under modern conditions; that a scientific priesthood would be as mischievous to mankind as an ecclesiastical one; that Renan's nightmare of pessimism is merely the reverse side of Comte's sacerdotal dream. Still, the absurdity is harmless, and the mischief is one there is no danger of. That "Positivist Church" — "three

* I cannot be sure that a review of these chapters under present lights would confirm the first impression. But I have reason to know that what has been said above was the judgment also of so sober a critic as President Walker, who first directed my attention to them.

persons and no God," as was scoffingly said of it — is too small in numbers to frighten anybody; while from it have come some of the wisest and humanest of all expositions of contemporary politics. Take even its much-ridiculed forms of worship. There are two features in this droll burlesque of Catholicity (if we choose to call it so), which should redeem it from contempt. One is certainly interesting and noble: the aim to hold in perpetual remembrance all those of every time who have done best service or honor to humanity. The other is genuinely pathetic, when we think of that lost world of affection, emotion, and faith, which this feeble attempt would fain restore. We might pardon much to a ritual whose chief sacrament consists in a crust of dry bread laid beside the plate at every meal in perpetual memory of the poor and needy.

Comte's childhood was trained amidst the fervors of the Catholic reaction in the South of France. His mother, a woman of genuine devotion, was his "guardian angel" and his type of saintliness: it was one of his last wishes to be buried by her side. The Catholic type of piety he not only held to be the most precious thing in the life of the past; but he assiduously cultivated it in himself, keeping Dante and the "Imitation of Christ" always on his mantel (where I saw them), and devoting two hours of every day to his "spiritual exercises." Far from desiring or praising mere assent to his intellectual method, he vehemently and jealously insisted that his Religion was the one thing in his system that gave value to the rest; and he died, I suppose, in

the belief, which he expresses somewhere, that if he could reach the age of Fontenelle, he should see himself generally recognized as (what he chose to call himself) "Founder of the Religion of Humanity," and a sort of Chief Pontiff of the human race.

But now, taking the intellectual results to which we have been led, it remains to give them our religious interpretation. This is widely different from that of Comte; and yet, as I think, we must come squarely up to his position before we can get beyond it. We must learn to look at the fact purely as fact. There is no capacity in the human mind to get behind it. We have not to account for the Universe, or to apologize for it; only, if we can, to see it as it is. A speculative theodicy is as much out of our province as a speculative teleology.

The right attitude of the religious mind is exactly the same as that of the scientific mind, — to humble itself before the fact. Only, religion does not stop here, as science does. For, in the view of religion, the fact itself is not the ultimate thing; it is the condition under which the higher intellectual and moral life is to be attained, — that life, of which the watchwords are not science, wealth, or delight, but obedience and trust and help.

In the next place, it is not of the smallest consequence whether we give to the fact a materialistic or an idealistic interpretation; whether, as Mr. Huxley has worded it, we interpret the Universe in terms of thought, or in terms of matter and motion. Either of these is simply a reverse view of the other; each is, so to speak, the other's reflection in a mirror. For

our religious interpretation, it is absolutely indifferent which we take. Some of Mr. Spencer's disciples have thought to vindicate him from the charge of materialism, and have spoken as if he made a substantial concession to the religious mind, when he declared that his system could be expounded just as well in terms of idealism. Of course it could. It is only "beholding his own natural face in a glass." Philosophical idealism, so far as it is true at all, is simply the double, or ghost, of scientific materialism. The sequence of facts may be seen just as well in a mirror, which reflects them, as through a lens, which refracts them. We have no religious interest whatever in discarding or in choosing either. It is simply a question which of the two more accurately presents to us the orderly sequences of fact. And it is the thinnest of sophisms to say that, for any religious value they may have, "terms of mind" are one jot the better, or "terms of matter" are one jot the worse.

The real antithesis of materialism is not idealism, which is only its ghost or double; but spiritualism,* or some other term by which we express the moral freedom of an intelligent agent. So long as we stop short with the fact, or concern ourselves only with the "laws of similitude and succession of phenomena," we are in the circle of Necessity; as Comte puts it, of "Destiny, which is the sum of known laws, and Chance, which is the sum of those laws which are unknown." That is, we are on the plane of materialism, or its reflex idealism, — it matters not which.

* Not Spiritism, which is a different thing.

But no sane man does stop short with the fact, or concern himself only with those unalterable sequences which represent to us nothing but an eternal necessity. Whatever else philosophers differ in, they all agree in applying to human actions language which would be wildly absurd if applied to mere necessary sequences. Expressions of love, blame, praise, contempt, can only by a violent stretch of fancy be used of a flower, a landscape, or a waterfall. Appeals to conscience, or urgings to an ideal aim, would be wasted upon the most intelligent of brutes. The naturalist knows no such emotions in his line of study as the moralist must constantly take for granted in his. The anatomist must study his human "subject" when the life is well out of it: his representative man, as Dr. Wilkinson expresses it, is "a corpse, not a gentleman." In the logic of certain physiologists, the normal human being should be a sleepwalker or a mesmeric patient. A critic of human acts, or human institutions, though he call himself necessarian or fatalist, inevitably takes for granted moral agency on one part, and moral judgment on the other. We have only to consider what this implies, to know what is meant when we speak of the universal, unconscious, perpetual testimony of the human race to the fact — whatever name we choose to call it by — of Moral Freedom.

Nor, again, do we find this testimony contradicted in the least by what we have come to understand in the phrase "the Reign of Law." If we did, we should have to reconsider our premises very carefully, before venturing to deny that universal fact of

consciousness. Give to the sphere of Law all the expansion we can possibly conceive; still it does not, necessarily, mean anything more to us than to define the conditions under which we act. Probably no living man ever realized to himself what it would mean if the Universe were a mere machine of mechanical evolution, instead of being what it is, a field for the play of living force and intelligent will.*

Of course, the range of moral liberty is strictly circumscribed. If not, wilful and passionate creatures as we are, we should soon have nothing but chaos to live in, — as indeed it seems to threaten, sometimes, if passion should once arm itself with modern explosives. We may not, perhaps, even say that we throw the warp upon the woof which Nature gives us. It may be that we can only stitch in the faintest embroidery upon the destined web woven by law and circumstance: still, that is enough to employ all our skill. Our game of chess is limited by the edges of the board, the powers of the pieces, and some twenty or thirty arbitrary rules which we had no hand in making; but there is enough left to give play to all our faculty of choice in determining the moves.

It is thus that, standing in the midst of this Divine or natural circle of Necessity, we are entitled, without the least trouble to our confidence, to assert all we can possibly want or mean in the phrase "Moral Freedom." As soon as we once vigorously conceive this, we necessarily reflect it back upon the Universe, whose laws we have been attempting to

* An attempt at such realization is found in that strange nightmare known as Richter's "Dream."

understand; and so, in place of a pitiless Law, a lifeless Order, a metaphysical Absolute, a cosmic Theism ineffectual and pale, we find the Living God.

Not, necessarily, that we can grasp the intellectual conception by the way of a speculative theology. If we can, so much the better. But all that the religious interpretation of the universe demands is given us, as soon as we feel ourselves living agents, not blind cogs and pinions in the "grind" of blind and eternal Law.

The Theism which accords with the highest conceptions of our Science is thus seen to be — what from the laws of human thought it has all along been shown to be — the reflex of our moral consciousness, not of our intellectual contemplation. It is in this sense true that "Conscience is the consciousness of God," — which as a mere phrase of speculative philosophy might well seem arrogant and futile. It signifies that, constituted as we are, we cannot vividly conceive the fact of moral freedom, but that the Universe suddenly (so to speak) becomes alive, with life responsive to our own. The blank wall of Necessity is seen as a vast transparency, illuminated from a light beyond, which shows dim hints and traces of a design, intricate and harmonious, that was invisible before. For it is impossible even to think of conscience and moral freedom, or moral law, in a universe that is mechanical and dead.

We find in this experience, it is true, no philosophic definition, and no demonstration of Divine Attributes; but the voluntary, devout, inevitable ac-

ceptance of the fact. And, again, it is not simple intellectual acceptance, which is equally good once and always. It depends on moral conditions, and so will vary with our moral mood. It is less acceptance than attainment. It has so much of intellectual apprehension, and no more, as to serve for the groundwork of that discipline which we call the method of the religious life.

Without this fundamental axiom of the moral consciousness, the cosmic Order becomes to us, inevitably, a bleak and terrible Fatalism. So far as we can see, the everlasting play of its machinery does not grind out either virtue or happiness to the great mass of sentient being. We should say rather, with Paul, — with Schopenhauer, who in this consents with Paul, — that "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now." * The solution, for us, can only be in the words that complete Paul's phrase: "*waiting to be delivered.*" Fatalism, which is the last word of all purely speculative or evolutionary schemes, means either a futile Optimism, of which we can see no proofs, or else a hard Pessimism, which is the message of despair. But just here comes in that paradox of our better nature: that the instant we set about to right any wrong, to make the crooked straight, or diminish the suffering and injustice that prevail, the mystery and the terror disappear. The feeblest act that wakens the moral consciousness works that miracle at which theory toils in vain: to make the man, as in Emer-

* Compare what is said of Paganism in "The Middle Age," pp. 179, 180.

son's generous gospel, a counterpoise against the universe.

This result appears to follow from two principles, which have been implied all along: * that, from the law of our being, we necessarily reflect back upon the universe our own sense of right, so that the Living God becomes to our thought inevitably a Righteous God, whether or not we understand his ways; † and secondly, that the religious life leads of itself into that range of the higher emotions, — adoration, gratitude, hope, resting on absolute submission to a higher Will, — which are a chief solvent of such pain and wrong as may fall to our own private lot.

The point to be borne in mind, however, is that the germ of this higher life is not speculative but ethical. It begins with the distinct recognition and choice of right as against wrong. If it should attain no more than is given in George Eliot's rather feeble phrase of "meliorism," even here it finds what, for the individual need, may be a calm, a deep, and a sufficing faith: a faith, too, which, raying out from that live centre, may come at length to embrace every spiritual need.

For the present, I find in this the conclusion of the whole matter. It does not come within my plan

* See the foregoing chapter.

† This does not by any means imply that Hedonism, or the "greatest-happiness principle," is the law of the universe. On the contrary, the Divine holiness was never more vividly conceived than by the Puritans, whose creed was quite the opposite. In the splendid paradox of Carlyle, "There is in man a higher than the love of happiness. He can do without happiness, and instead thereof find blessedness!"

to speak here of what is doing, or what may be done, to build religion up again on the new foundations.* I wish only, as distinctly as may be, to see just where that evolution of thought, which is the intellectual interpretation of Christian history, has brought us. This evolution is the result of innumerable special forces; but behind them all is that prodigious moral or spiritual force, which we call the revelation of God in human history. In that Word was life; and the life was the light of men.

It does not, in this view, matter in the least whether we regard Christianity under any formal definition that can be given of it, as a perpetual dispensation, or as destined to be absorbed and lose its separate identity in coming growths of religious thought. For the present, at all events, it has a recognizable character of its own, under all its diversities, and an unbroken line of tradition which connects its freest and broadest forms at once with the simplicity of its origin, and with its most imperial constructions in the so-called Ages of Faith. There is no reason whatever to think that its first disciples expected for it anything like the duration it has had already, or the expansion it shows at this hour. Those proud constructions of ecclesiasticism and dogma are, it may be, sure to perish; but it is of the nature of a Force to persist, though in new forms and under other names, without any loss of continuity. The only immortality we can imagine upon earth is the transmission of one life through many forms.

* The sequel of these pages will be found in "Our Liberal Movement," especially under the titles — A Scientific Theology, The Religion of Humanity, and The Gospel of Liberalism.

With this conviction I complete a task which was planned nearly thirty-five years ago, and which has been held, as opportunity seemed to open, steadily in view ever since. These thirty-five years have been said on high authority to be revolutionary in the current religious thought, more than any other period of equal length, unless we should except the first Christian century. It has been the privilege of my birthright in Liberal Christianity, that the intellectual conditions of religious faith have remained in my mind fundamentally the same as when my task was first projected. And it will be still more my privilege, if there shall be others to whom this fulfilment of it may prove in any way a help or a comfort, such as it has been to me.

CHRONOLOGICAL OUTLINE.

	Popes.
1500.	1492. *Alexander VI.*
1509–47. Reign of Henry VIII.	1503. *Pius III.*
1510. Luther in Rome.	" *Julius II.*
1517. Controversy of Indulgences; Luther's *Theses.*	13. *Leo X.*
1519–55. Charles V., Emperor.	
1521. Luther at Worms.	22. *Adrian VI.*
1525. Battle of Pavia. — Peasants' War.	23. *Clement VII.*
1529. Conference of Marburg: Luther and Zwingli.	
1531. War of the Cantons: Death of Zwingli.	34. *Paul III.*
1536. Calvin at Geneva. — 39. "Six Articles" of Henry VIII.	
1540. Jesuit Order. — 42. General Inquisition.	
1545–63. Council of Trent.	
1547. Smalcaldic War. — Edward VI.; Henry II.	
1553. Burning of Servetus in Geneva.	50. *Julius III.*
1553–58. Philip and Mary.	
1555. Peace of Augsburg: Abdication of Charles V.	55. *Paul IV.*
1558–1603. Elizabeth.	
1559. Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis.	59. *Pius IV.*
1560–98. Religious Wars in France.	
1566–1609. War of Netherlands.	66. *Pius V.*
1572. Massacre of St. Bartholomew.	72. *Gregory XIII.*
1584. Murder of Orange.	
1588. Destruction of the Spanish Armada.	85. *Sixtus V.*
1589–1610. Henry IV.	90. *Gregory XIV.*
1598. Religious Peace: Edict of Nantes.	91. *Clement VIII.*

Note. — The Council of Trent sat at intervals determined by political considerations, and held in all twenty-five sessions. The topics were in general these: 1546. The Creed, the Canon of Scripture (which is defined to that of the Latin Vulgate), and the doctrines of Original Sin and Baptism. — 1547. Doctrines of Justification and Sacraments. — 1551. The Eucharist, Penance, Extreme Unction. — 1562–3. Celebration of Mass, Holy Orders, Matrimony, Purgatory, and Worship of Saints.

POPES.

1600. Martyrdom of Giordano Bruno.
1603–25. JAMES I. 1605. *Paul V.*
1608. Independents emigrate to Holland.
1610. Murder of Henry IV. — Catholic League.
1610–43. LOUIS XIII. (Mary de Medicis).
1615. War of Huguenots under Condé.
1618. Synod of Dort. — 19. Execution of Barneveldt.
1618–48. Thirty Years' War.
1620. Pilgrim Colony at Plymouth. 21. *Gregory XV.*
1624–42. Ministry of Richelieu. 3. *Urban VIII.*
1625–48. CHARLES I.
1628. Rochelle taken ; Huguenot power destroyed.
1629–41. "Thorough" policy of Laud and Stafford.
1632. Battle of Lützen ; Death of Gustavus.
1640. Publication of Jansen's *Augustinus.*
1642–48. Civil War in England.
1643–1715. LOUIS XIV. 44. *Innocent X.*
1645. Battle of Naseby ; Supremacy of Independents.
1648. Peace of Westphalia.
1649. Execution of Charles I. : COMMONWEALTH.
1653. Jansen's Five Propositions condemned. 55. *Alexander VII.*
1660. Restoration of Charles II.
1662. Act of Uniformity: Nonconformists.
1662. "Half-way Covenant" in New England.
1664. Conventicle Act.
1665. Persecution of Jansenists.
1665. Five-Mile Act. 67 *Clement IX.*
1673. Test Act (abolished, 1828). 70. *Clement X.*
1681–87. Sect of Quietists: Molinos. 76. *Innocent XI.*
1682. "Gallican Liberties" asserted.
1685. Revocation of the Edict of Nantes.
1685–89. JAMES II.
1686. "Declaration of Indulgence" to Catholics.
1689. English Revolution: WILLIAM III. 89. *Alexander VIII.*
1696–1748. Deistical Controversy. 91. *Innocent XII.*
1700. Act of Succession : Non-juring Clergy. 1700. *Clement XI.*
1709. Destruction of Port-Royal.
1714. GEORGE I. — Jacobite and Papist plots.
1722. Moravian Community (Herrnhut).

		Popes.
1715–74.	Louis XV. (1715–23. Orleans Regency.)	
1717.	Bangorian Controversy (Hoadly and Non-jurors).	
1727.	Abbé Pâris † — *Convulsionnaires.*	21. *Innocent XIII.*
1735.	"Great Awakening" in New England.	24. *Benedict XIII.*
1739.	Secession of Wesley: Methodism.	30. *Clement XII.*
1740.	Rise of Swedenborgianism.	40. *Benedict XIV.*
1751–65.	The Encyclopædia (Diderot and D'Alembert).	
1755.	Earthquake at Lisbon: Persecution of Jews.	
1760–1820.	George III.	58. *Clement XIII.*
1762.	Execution of Calas.	
1764.	Jesuits expelled from France.	69. *Clement XIV.*
1773.	Jesuit Order abolished (restored, 1814).	
1774–92.	Reign of Louis XVI.	75. *Pius VI.*
1781.	Publication of Kant's Philosophy.	
1789.	French Revolution: Privileges abolished.	
1790.	Suppression of Monastic Houses in France.	
1791.	Oath to Constitution required.	
1793.	Reign of Terror: Persecution of French Clergy.	
1795.	Festival of *Être Suprême.*	
1797.	Sect of Theophilanthropists established.	
1800.	Victories of Napoleon.	1800. *Pius VII.*
1801.	Concordat of Napoleon.	
1806.	"Holy Roman Empire" abolished.	
1808.	Inquisition abolished in Italy and Spain.	
1809.	Captivity of Pius VII.; Temporal Power abolished.	
1814.	Jesuits and Inquisition restored.	
1815.	Holy Alliance: Russia, Austria, and Prussia.	
1828.	Repeal of Test Act.	23. *Leo XII.*
1829.	Catholic Emancipation in England.	29. *Pius VIII.*
1832.	Passage of Reform Bill.	31. *Gregory XVI.*
1833–41.	Tractarianism at Oxford.	
1843.	Free Church in Scotland.	46 *Pius IX.*
1854.	Doctrine of Immaculate Conception.	
1864.	Syllabus of Errors (Encyclical of Pius IX.)	
1869.	Irish Church Disestablished.	
1870.	Papal infallibility declared; Temporal Power abolished.	
1871.	German Empire restored.	78. *Leo XIII.*
1880.	Unauthorized Congregations forbidden in France.	

EMINENT NAMES.

Theology and Philosophy.

Erasmus, 1467–1536.
Luther, 1483–1546.
Zwingli, 1484–1531.
Loyola, 1491–1556.
Calvin, 1509–1564.
Knox, 1505–1572.
Molina, 1535–1601.
Arminius, 1560–1609.
Jansen, 1585–1638.
Arnauld, 1612–1694.
Bossuet, 1627–1704.
Locke, 1632–1704.
Malebranche, 1638–1715.
Fénelon, 1651–1715.
Clarke, 1675–1729.
Berkeley, 1684–1753.
Butler, 1692–1752.
Hume, 1711–1776.
Kant, 1724–1804.
Jacobi, 1743–1819.
Schleiermacher, 1768–1834.
Coleridge, 1772–1834.
Channing, 1780–1842.
Lamennais, 1782–1854.
Lacordaire, 1802–1861.

Science and Letters.

Copernicus, 1473–1543.
Montaigne, 1533–1592.
Giordano Bruno, 1550–1600.
Raleigh, 1552–1618.
Bacon, 1561–1626.
Shakspeare, 1564–1616.
Galileo, 1564–1642.
Kepler, 1571–1630.
Hobbes, 1588–1679.
Descartes, 1596–1650.
Milton, 1608–1674.
Pascal, 1623–1662.
Spinoza, 1632–1677.
Leibnitz, 1646–1716.
Newton, 1642–1727.
Bayle, 1647–1706.
Voltaire, 1694–1778.
Rousseau, 1712–1778.
Lessing, 1729–1781.
Laplace, 1749–1827.
Dalton, 1766–1844.
Chateaubriand, 1769–1848.
Comte, 1798–1857.
Carlyle, 1795–1881.
Darwin, 1809–1882.

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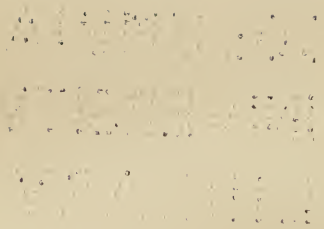

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